

Annual Activity Report 2025

Directorate-General for
European Civil Protection and
Humanitarian Aid Operations.

Contents

DG ECHO IN BRIEF	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
A. Key results and progress towards achieving the Commission's general objectives and department's specific objectives	4
B. Key performance indicators	6
C. Key conclusions on internal control and financial management	7
D. Provision of information to the Commissioner(s) [to the Steering Committee and to the parent DG(s) Director(s) General – Only for Executive Agencies]	8
1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT ()	9
2. INTERNAL CONTROL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	21
2.1. Control results	21
2.1.1. Overview of the budget and relevant control systems (RCS)	22
2.1.2. Effectiveness of controls	23
2.1.3. Efficiency of controls	26
2.1.4. Economy of controls	26
2.1.5. Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls	27
2.2. Audit observations and recommendations	28
2.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems	30
2.4. Conclusions on the assurance	31
2.5. Declaration of Assurance [and reservations]	32
3. A MODERN AND SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	33
3.1. Human resource management	33
3.2. Digital transformation and data management	34
3.3. Sound environmental management	35

DG ECHO IN BRIEF

The mandate 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 dignity of populations affected by natural hazards and human-induced disasters. To that end, the EU, through DG ECHO acts as both the EU humanitarian aid donor and emergency responder as well as coordinator for preparedness and facilitator of civil protection operations through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

The EU has consistently supported the global humanitarian system which was established under the United Nation's (UN) auspices in 1991. The EU, through DG ECHO, provides needs-based humanitarian assistance in 110 countries worldwide. Operations are guided by the humanitarian principles: impartiality, neutrality, humanity, non-discrimination, and independence. The annual budget exceeded **EUR 2.56 billion in 2025**, enabling the EU to intervene in large-scale humanitarian crises – including in Ukraine, Palestine, or Sudan – and in forgotten crises, i.e. those of severe and protracted character where the level of international attention insufficient, such as in the Philippines, Iraq, Mozambique, or in the Sahrawi crisis.

As a **humanitarian donor**, the EU operates through its partners, UN agencies, Red Cross & Red Crescent movement, and international non-governmental organisations. Beyond funding interventions, the EU has a leading role in developing thematic policies, supporting multilateral actions, and coordinating with EU Member States. As an emergency responder, the EU provides operational support, transporting relief supplies and aid workers by flight to hard-to-reach areas.

As facilitator for **civil protection**, disaster response, crisis management and preparedness, the EU, has emerged the premier coordinator of emergency response operations through the UCPM. Through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) at DG ECHO, the EU monitors and detects hazards, anticipates disasters, mobilises assistance to-and-from EU Member States and Participating States (MS/PS) on a 24/7 basis. This enables rapid EU solidarity in action whenever disasters strike. In line with Treaty provisions, the EU, through DG ECHO supports MS/PS to develop their civil protection capacities and champions consistency in international civil protection. RescEU is the EU's strategic reserve of emergency response capacities. Through DG ECHO, the EU develops, maintains, and mobilises this resource whilst seeking new partnerships and innovations to enhance EU preparedness and match the everchanging risk landscape. To fulfil these objectives, the budget available in 2025 for the UCPM exceeded **EUR 245 million**.

DG ECHO employs 590 ⁽¹⁾ staff in headquarters and maintains a 450-staff deployment in the field. Global field presence provides first-hand information about the situation on the ground, monitors- and supports operations, via more than 50 field offices located in over 40 countries.

⁽¹⁾ DG ECHO currently employs 465 statutory staff (officials and contract agents) and 133 external staff (service providers, national experts and trainees).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Key results and progress towards achieving the Commission's general objectives and department's specific objectives ⁽²⁾

EU humanitarian aid, crisis management and civil protection have never been more important. In 2025, an estimated **305.1 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance and protection**. Yet in July, amid a record level financial, legitimacy, and moral crisis affecting the humanitarian system, UN OCHA published a hyper prioritised **Global Humanitarian Overview**, only covering assistance to 114 million people, a third of the total estimated number of people in need.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine entered its fourth year in 2025. The daily drone strikes, and long-range strikes keeps endangering the lives of millions of Ukrainians. The **conflict in Gaza** is at the centre of a devastating humanitarian crisis in the **Middle East**, with regional instability reaching its peak during the fallout from Israel's attack on Iran in June. The EU responded with an allocation of EUR 220 million in humanitarian funding to both crises respectively, and the continuation of large civil protection operations in both Ukraine and the Middle East. In 2025, the world witnessed dramatic consequences of ongoing conflicts in Sudan and Myanmar, including a devastating earthquake in the latter. Further, complex crises in the Sahel, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and Venezuela added to the precarious state of humanitarian affairs.

The main drivers of humanitarian crisis are **conflict and insecurity**, the **impact of climate change**, failed governance, and epidemiological outbreaks. The delivery of- and access to lifesaving aid is further made both difficult and dangerous due to repeated violations of **International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**, human rights, and due to war crimes being committed with impunity. Infringing upon the sanctity of civilians has become a hallmark of modern conflict and is often impacting humanitarian personnel as well.

Despite humanitarian needs remaining at an all-time high, whilst resources and space for humanitarian action are diminishing, DG ECHO **successfully managed to reach its objectives in 2025**, delivering principled worldwide humanitarian support and funding, in line with the priorities and key actions outlined in the Commission Communication ⁽³⁾ on the EU's Humanitarian Action **New challenges, same principles**.

DG ECHO teamed up with Member States to advocate the preservation of humanitarian space and the respect for IHL. Efforts to counter the global food crisis was pursued by allocating around EUR 600 million in **humanitarian food and nutrition assistance**. **Health** and

⁽²⁾ For Executive Agencies the title of this section should be: 'Implementation of the Agency's Annual Work Programme - highlights of the year'.

protection assistance remained key sectors in 2025, with an allocation of nearly 15% of the EU Humanitarian aid budget respectively.

Moreover, DG ECHO continued to dedicate 10% of the initial budget to **education in emergencies** and took strides towards a collaborative and interoperable **supply chain model**. It also created **ReliefEU** and has supported over 100 partners with logistical services such as EU Humanitarian Air Bridge Flights (HAB), stockpile donations, and expert deployments into 18 different countries in 2025.

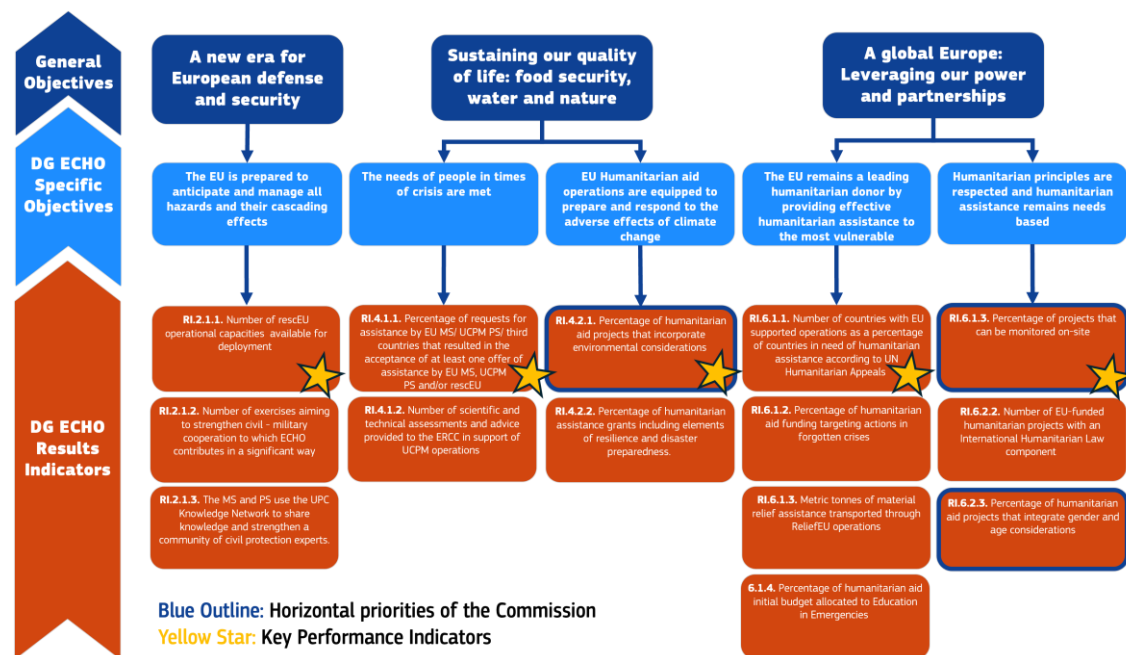
DG ECHO has been working towards strengthening overall preparedness and resilience in Europe. The **Preparedness Union Strategy** (PUS), one of the 100-day deliverables of President von der Leyen's second mandate, was adopted in March 2025. It lays out the strategy for better preparedness in the EU and promotes an all-hazard, whole-of-society, whole-of-government approach to preparedness. The implementation of the 63 actions of the Strategy is a key priority. The Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Health Emergency Preparedness (UCPM/HER) legislative proposal and the Stockpiling Strategy, both adopted in July 2025, are among the first key actions delivered by DG ECHO.

The ERCC supported the implementation of the DG ECHO's mandate by coordinating and facilitating the delivery of assistance. The ERCC received 103 new requests under the UCPM, (in addition to 19 remaining emergencies opened between 2022 and 2024), for disasters such as floods, cyclones, wildfires, and conflicts. **Ukraine continues to be the largest UCPM operation** to date, with 39 updated requests covering a wide diversity of sectors. This includes increasingly complex operations delivering energy items and constant support for medical evacuations (Medevac). The ERCC supported 729 patients in 2025.

DG ECHO swiftly coordinated the deployment of 24 assets ⁽⁴⁾ under rescEU transition and 2 assets under rescEU proper in the summer of 2025. Moreover, DG ECHO launched the production of the first **rescEU planes**. In 2025, the also ERCC played a key role as a 24/7 support to the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements, concerning Ukraine and the Middle East. Beyond operations, the ERCC has worked on improving its analytical and scientific capacity ahead of the development of the EU crisis coordination hub. The operationalisation of the scientific partnership on chemical hazards and the establishment of a partnership to analyse conflict and its consequence have significantly contributed to this aim. Finally, to support MS/PS in building resilience, DG ECHO has co-financed **27 prevention and preparedness projects** in 2025. In line with PUS, **UCPM Knowledge Network** has mainstreamed prevention and preparedness across relevant policies and capacity building tools.

(⁴) An 'asset' or 'response capacity' refers to assistance that may be provided through the Union Mechanism upon request. In this case it refers to aircrafts and helicopters deployed for firefighting.

DG ECHO Logic of Intervention 2024-2029



B. Key performance indicators

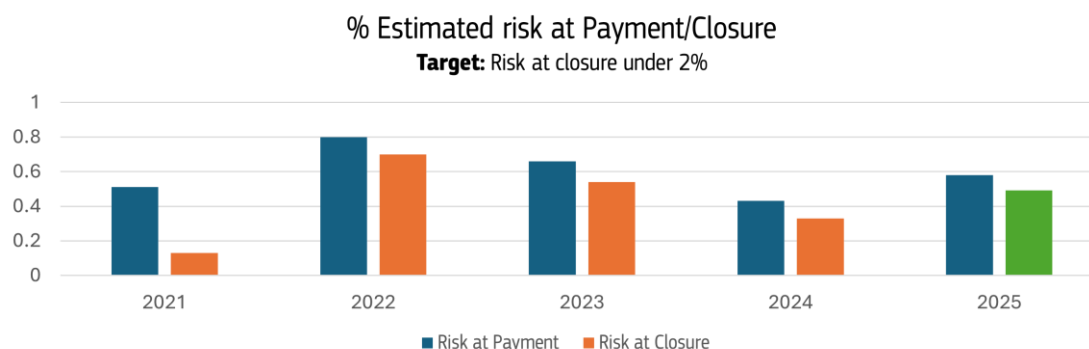
KPI #	KPI Title	Baseline (2024)	2025	Interim milestone (2027)	Target (2029)
Specific objective 2.1: The EU is prepared to anticipate and manage all hazards and their cascading effects.					
2.1.1	Number of rescEU operational capacities available for deployment.	30	36	>30	>30
Specific objective 4.1: The needs of people in times of crises are met.					
4.1.1	Percentage of requests for assistance by EU MS/ UCPM PS/ third countries that resulted in the acceptance of at least one offer of assistance by EU MS, UCPM PS and/or rescEU.	EU Member States: 95.2% UCPM Participating States: 100% Third Countries: 79.3%	EU Member States: 86% UCPM Participating States: 100% Third Countries: 78%	EU Member States: 90% UCPM Participating States: 90% Third Countries: 50%	EU Member States: 90% UCPM Participating States: 90% Third Countries: 50%
Specific objective 4.2: EU Humanitarian aid operations are equipped to mitigate and respond to the adverse effects of climate change.					
4.2.1	Percentage of humanitarian aid projects that incorporate environmental considerations.	38.9%	45.5%	55%	70%
Specific objective 6.1: The EU remains a leading humanitarian donor by providing effective humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable.					
6.1.1	Number of countries with EU supported operations as a percentage of countries in need of humanitarian assistance according to UN Humanitarian Appeals.	98%	95.2%	>95%	>95%
Specific objective 6.2: Humanitarian principles are respected and humanitarian assistance remains needs based.					
6.2.1	Percentage of projects that can be monitored on-site.	92.7%	92.2%	>90%	>90%

Caption: The table features a colour-coded (left-right) bar system to visually represent the evolution of the indicator in comparison with the target. A green colour (bar on the right) indicates that the indicator is moving in the correct direction, whereas a red colour (bar on the left) suggests that the indicator needs to change course. For numerical indicators, the size of the bar also indicates proximity (distance) to the target.

Comments: **SO 6.1** performed under baseline due to the disbursement of funds for the South America allocation. DG ECHO focused on impact rather than dispersion in and around the Venezuela crisis and thus did not cover the three following countries: Curacao, Paraguay and

Uruguay. To note is that DG ECHO cover many more countries than the UN appeals, with 110 countries receiving EU humanitarian funding in 2025.

SO 6.2 performed under baseline due to security and access restrictions. Out of the 26 projects that could not be monitored on site in 2025, 11 stated security and access as a barrier to field monitoring, the remaining projects listed reasons such as logistical issues or the project having no field component.



C. Key conclusions on internal control and financial management

DG ECHO has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, as well as the observations and recommendations issued by the internal auditor and the European Court of Auditors.

The transition in 2025 to the Commission's new accounting system, SUMMA, has required the adjustment to a new system and has impacted budget implementation tasks, processes and financial management activities, particularly during the first part of the year. This has required careful management to ensure the same data quality as in previous years.

All the above elements have been assessed to determine their impact on management's assurance about the achievement of the control objectives. Please refer for further details to section 2 on Internal Control and Financial Management.

In line with the Commission's Internal Control Framework DG ECHO has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective and the components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies related to principles ten (10), twelve (12) and fourteen (14). The improvements and/or remedial measures envisioned are a thorough review of the measures in place to determine how to improve them.

In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated. The Director-General, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation, has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

D. Provision of information to the Commissioner(s)

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the DG ECHO and the Commissioner on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration, have been brought to the attention of Commissioner Lahbib, responsible for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management.

1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT ⁽⁵⁾

Communication

DG ECHO intensified its communication efforts to highlight initiatives under the unified narrative of EU solidarity. It devised a blend of communication strategies to sustain public support and political endorsement of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection

In terms of **press work**, the Commission spokespersons' service published 31 press releases and 67 press announcements covering main operations and achievements. DG ECHO organised a series of successful **media trips with European journalists** to Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Mauritania, digital content creators' trips to Brussels, Kenya and the Philippines, and provided financial support to journalists accompanying the Commissioner on her missions to Chad, Sweden, Latin America and Egypt.

DG ECHO carried out two **awareness-raising campaigns** in 2025, both achieving record-high cumulative reach. The civil protection campaign '*rescEU: We prepare together, we act together*' reached more than 22 million people in 7 Member States via social media and digital ads. The humanitarian campaign *#VoicesOfHumanity* reached over 75.2 million people in 10 Member States, surpassing last year's reach of 70 million people.

The **podcast partnerships** with podcasters in 3 EU countries led to the production of 12 episodes, generating over 139 000 downloads. Social media campaigns promoting each episode reached an average of over 2.4 million users per episode.

Digital media content focused on personal stories from world crises, resulting in **117.7 million social media impressions** and an increase in followers on social media compared to 2024 (+4.98%). DG ECHO achieved this despite a challenging social media landscape marked by the relative decline of the X user base. The LinkedIn page developed in collaboration with JRC and HERA continued to deliver strong results in 2025. The page reaches around 24 300 followers and has generated over 5 million impressions. Copernicus and FPI also joined the page, further strengthening its interservice and cross-policy objective. In 2025, the DG ECHO website surpassed its targets for both views and visitors: the numbers are comparable to results achieved in 2024.

⁽⁵⁾ An executive agency uses as heading: "Implementation of the Agency's annual work programme - Highlights of the year".

The fourth edition of the **European Humanitarian Forum (EHF)**, co-organised with the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, re-affirmed the EU leadership and engagement on humanitarian aid. Gathering 2 300 participants, representing 117 nationalities, the event took place in May in Brussels. This is the **largest event DG ECHO has organised to date**. Back-to-back with the 2025 EHF, DG ECHO organised the first **Implementation Dialogue** with Commissioner Lahbib. The Dialogue touched upon the humanitarian reset, fragility, localisation, and IHL violations. Commissioner Lahbib articulated her support for the Humanitarian Reset and reaffirmed the EU's steadfast dedication to humanitarian principles.

The **Knowledge Network Platform**, a web hub for civil protection and Disaster Risk Management stakeholders continued to grow. In 2025, the number of visitors increased by 18.5% compared to previous year. The Knowledge Network newsletter increased its number of views by 330% in the same period. Engagement also rose which is evident by the number of community members increasing with nearly 45%, to almost 1 900.

The **EU Academy ECHO Partners Community**, along with the learning resources available in the ECHO Partners Website, also continued to grow. The community had 2 666 members at the end of 2025. The academy provides ECHO humanitarian aid partners with in-depth courses on the use of the ECHO Partnership mechanism, the application and implementation of grants, and it provides a closer look at DG ECHO humanitarian policies. Courses are continually revised and new ones made available.

Reliability of performance information

DG ECHO relies on its own data, information received from partners, and data from verified sources such as [UN Financial Tracking Service](#) and official reporting such as [OCHA's Global Humanitarian Overview](#) report.

DG ECHO implements controls to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of performance information related to the EU budget spending programmes. No issues with this system were revealed in 2025. The data processing principles, established in the 'Data governance and data policies', are followed. In addition to EC tools available (ABAC and SUMMA), DG ECHO uses specific information systems and databases (HOPE, EVA Actions, EDRIS, APPEL, CPRP, CECIS and e-grants) to retrieve data encoded daily. For data originating from entrusted entities (indirect management), or received from beneficiaries (direct management), reliability measures include:

- Certification process (for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or Member States' Specialised Agencies (MSSAs) and the pillar assessment (for the entrusted entities') reviewing the entities internal control systems.
- The regular monitoring and engagement with implementing actors.
- The review and evaluation of reports (periodic operational and financial reports, management declarations, independent audit reports, etc.).
- Quality controls on performance information, assessing consistency, completeness, and conducting plausibility checks to identify outliers or encoding errors.

General Objective 2: A new era for European defence and security

Specific Objective 1: The EU is prepared to anticipate and manage all hazards and their cascading effects.

Building on the Niinistö Report on Preparedness and Readiness, the Commission and the High Representative adopted the **Preparedness Union Strategy** (PUS) in March 2025. It is a flagship initiative of the new Commission mandate aimed at strengthening the EU's capacity to anticipate, prevent and act in an increasingly complex risk landscape. PUS provides a framework for response to growing geopolitical tensions, hybrid and cyber threats, climate change and the rising frequency of natural disasters. It outlines **63 actions**, out of which, 30 key actions. Moreover, it calls for a **“preparedness by design” approach** with the aim to mainstream preparedness across EU policies and instruments. The Strategy focuses on strengthening essential societal functions, enhancing population preparedness and improving crisis coordination. DG ECHO plays a central role in its implementation, through civil protection policy, preparedness coordination and support to Member States, contributing to a more resilient and secure European Union.

As one of its first deliverables, DG ECHO has developed a cross-sectoral **EU Stockpiling Strategy**, adopted in July 2025 together with **the Strategy on Medical Countermeasures**. The Stockpiling strategy aims to enhance the availability of essential goods throughout the EU and builds on the experiences of the UCPM and rescEU. It addresses the entire stockpiling cycle, from anticipation, monitoring of supply chains, supply security, to management of stockpiles, and deployment. The UCPM **Capacity Gaps Report** produced by DG ECHO in 2025 complements the stockpiling strategy.

To ensure the EU's civil protection and crisis management framework remains fit for purpose, DG ECHO lead the **Impact Assessment** (IA) accompanying a proposal for the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Health Emergency Preparedness (**UCPM/HER) Regulation**. Taking cues from the Better Regulations Toolbox, the IA defined four general objectives and offered several policy options to guide the legislative revision. Building on the IA, the regulation was presented as part of the preparations for the next **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034**. The legal proposal aims to reinforce prevention, preparedness and response across the full disaster management cycle, with a particular focus on improved coordination and interoperability at EU level. The Commission, represented by DG ECHO and DG HERA participated in the Council's negotiations in the pertinent Council Working Party, PROCIV, with 11 meetings on the proposal having taken place in 2025 under the Danish Presidency. The proposal contributes to **simplification** of EU Civil Protection, including centralising risk reporting to foster operational clarity and efficiency. This was reported in The Annual Progress Report on simplification, implementation and enforcement, published on 21 October 2025.

In 2025 and in line with PUS, the ERCC enhanced **civil-military coordination** through the planning and implementation exercises with civil-military cooperation components. The European Commission, through DG ECHO, started planning for the **EU Integrated Resolve**

2026 (EU IR26) and the EU–NATO Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE) Concept. ⁽⁶⁾

rescEU, commission's own preparedness reserve, was strengthened in 2025. Significant advancements were made for the impending **fully-fledged aerial firefighting fleet** at European level. The first **rescEU planes** are expected for delivery by early 2028. In parallel, DG ECHO continued the work with the rescEU transition arrangement to combat the increasing wildfire threat across Europe. During spring 2025, the ERCC prepositioned firefighting capacities across the EU, and first responders in five EU countries, ahead of the summer's wildfire season.

The primary reserve of capacities available for UCPM response operations is the **European Civil Protection Pool** (ECPPE). The number of certified and registered ECPPE capacities reached 118 by the end of 2025, a 17% increase in one year. In 2025, ECPPE capacities were deployed for consular and medical evacuations, forest firefighting, and emergency medical support.

The PUS emphasis on an integrated all-hazards, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach align with the **Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network's** (UCPKN) mission to connect, share and grow expertise across the civil protection community. During 2025 the Network started preparatory work to implement key actions under the population preparedness chapter of the PUS, including action 26, 27, 29 and 30 ⁽⁷⁾.

Under the umbrella of the UCPKN, **45 training activities**, offering 821 course places, including workshops and training-of-trainers, were delivered. In addition, 12 exercises for European Civil Protection Modules and Experts (MODEX), and one 1 full-scale exercise was organised. Furthermore, 215 experts attended 33 exchanges hosted by civil protection authorities across Europe. The UCPKN took lead in organising a **Youth Policy Dialogue on Preparedness**, together with the EU Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA). It gave youth the chance to share their views on citizens' risk awareness and preparedness with Commissioner Lahbib.

To support MS/PS to build resilience, the EU co-finance **27 prevention and preparedness projects** in 2025. This included 13 single-country grants to disaster risk management authorities (Track 1) and 14 multi-country grants (KAPP). The report on the Italian wildfire risk management system was published and handed over at Ministerial level in January. The peer review for the Brandenburg Land (Germany) focused on wildfire risk governance, prevention, and preparedness was published in July 2025. Two new peer reviews on wildfire risk management have been initiated in 2025 (for Kosovo* and for Czechia).

⁽⁶⁾ EU-NATO PACE includes the EU Military Staff's MILEX 2025; NATO's STEADFAST DETERRENCE 2025, STEADFAST DUEL 2025, STEADFAST DAGGER 2025, and CMX 25 (the NATO-led exercise under the PACE Concept), and the CAMO 2025 of the Multinational Medical Coordination Centre/European Medical Command.

⁽⁷⁾ A26-27: A prepare training course on risk communication and a community of practice for experts. A29: Preparedness in schools education curricula and training of educational staff, A30: Promote preparedness in youth programmes.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

The **Technical Assistance Financing Facility** (TAFF) ⁽⁹⁾ had a successful second year of implementation. TAFF allow national civil protection and disaster risk management (DRM) authorities in MS/PS and Kosovo to access technical assistance and global knowledge on prevention and preparedness. Following the first call for expressions of interest (EOIs) in 2024, a second call was published in 2025. Seven new EOIs were selected and as of December, all 15 projects are being implemented.

Regarding UCPM regional cooperation, the fourth phase of the **regional civil protection programme for Eastern Partnership countries** was launched in November 2025. The programme is designed to boost disaster resilience across the Eastern Neighbourhood and facilitate partner countries' integration into the UCPM. DG ECHO manages three regional civil protection programmes financed by the UCPM and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). They support the Western Balkans, Türkiye, and Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood. ^{10(Obj.)} Finally, the negotiations have commenced on an Administrative Arrangement between DG ECHO and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Armenia.

Beyond the UCPM and PUS, DG ECHO continued promoting disaster risk reduction across EU policies. Noteworthy results include the first major targeting of **Horizon Europe** funding for the civil protection community. The 2025 work programme include EUR 100+ million available for **Disaster Resilient Societies**.

EU's Humanitarian assistance and Civil Protection response in Ukraine

The **fourth year of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** offered no reprieve for the **12.7 million** Ukrainians in need of humanitarian assistance. Daily drone attacks and long-range strikes threaten civilians and humanitarian workers alike, while causing systematic damage to energy and water infrastructure. The lives of millions of people have been disrupted by the destruction of schools, hospitals, and homes. Front-line villages and towns have been gutted, and people living in territories under Russia's military control face severe violations of their rights. **Almost 3.4 million** Ukrainians are internally displaced across the country. In 2025, **EUR 220 million** was allocated to address immediate humanitarian needs, bringing the total EU humanitarian assistance to **EUR 1.25 billion since February 2022**. The EU continued mobilising all available tools, resources, and capacities to deliver assistance in record time. The EU provided life-saving assistance mainly through multi-purpose cash, protection, and targeted winter season support to populations directly exposed to war and displacement. As for neighbouring **Moldova**, which currently hosts some 130 000 Ukrainian refugees, the EU made **EUR 9.5 million** available, delivering assistance to the most vulnerable among the refugees, notably through cash assistance and protection services.

To facilitate deliveries, and allow for pooling of assistance from MS, the Commission continued to fund three UCPM logistical hubs. The support comprised a range of sectors with emphasis on energy, emergency response and health. The ERCC continued its Medevac operations, having **evacuated 4 800 patients from Ukraine since 2022** (729 in 2025). Following

⁽⁹⁾ TAFF is a partnership between the European Commission through DG ECHO, the World Bank, and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).

⁽¹⁰⁾ (IPA-CARE Capacity for Risk Management of Earthquakes and Health Emergencies, EUR 13 M; Multi-country Mapping Study Programme MCMS, EUR 2.5 M; and the On-Site Technical Assistance (OSA, EUR 3.2M).

bombardment of critical infrastructure, DG ECHO kept deploying repairs for energy infrastructure, including large transformers, generators and an entire **Thermal Power Plant** donated by Lithuania. The rescEU donation hub remained operational, channelling resources from private sector and third countries, contributing to the overall response in Ukraine.

General Objective 4: Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature

Specific Objective 1: The needs of people in times of crises are met.

The UCPM provides **tangible EU solidarity within the Union and in the world**. A total of **103 new requests for assistance** were received and processed by the ERCC in 2025. Of those, 28 came from MS, 13 from PS, and Ukraine updated 39 existing requests. An additional 19 requests, opened in 2022-2024, continued to be active during 2025. The UCPM is growing in importance outside of Europe, with 23 requests coming from third countries. Thanks to its unique infrastructure, established network of contacts, and expertise, the ERCC effectively acted as a hub for cross-sectoral operational and situational awareness. To support operations, DG ECHO increased the ERCC's access to scientific, analytical, and information management capacities in 2025. Improvements focused on **security-related policy** and strengthened civil-military cooperation, e.g. chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials and agents (CBRN), Critical Entities Resilience (CER), cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), hybrid and cyber threats.



Figure 1: As a helicopter drops water overhead, a French firefighter holds the line against the blaze in Spain.

The UCPM relies on state-of-the-art **technical-** and **scientific knowledge** to ensure efficient and effective emergency response. DG ECHO works closely with several Commission services, the European External Action Service, and with scientific partners (e.g. scientific partnerships providing expertise in natural hazards or radiological/nuclear risks) to provide situational awareness and analysis for operations. In addition to analytical briefs issued by the ERCC, the partnerships produced regular monitoring reports, emergency reports (which were shared to MS/PS, on-demand), and contributed to the anticipatory planning and awareness of the ERCC and the UCPM. During 2025, the ERCC operationalised the scientific partnership on **chemical hazards** and entered into preparations for a partnership that will provide assessment on the **consequences of conflict**.

In 2025, the ERCC acted 24/7 support to the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements, contributing to the EU-coordinated response under the two ongoing IPCR activations, concerning the war in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East. This includes lead

on the Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) reporting for Members States and active participation in the regular IPCR roundtables.

Specific Objective 2: EU Humanitarian aid and civil protection operations are equipped to prepare and respond to the adverse effects of climate change

To reduce the carbon footprint and the environmental damage of humanitarian aid, **Minimum Environmental Requirements** became mandatory for all EU-funded humanitarian operations back in 2023. Since then, DG ECHO has been investing heavily in capacity building to support partners in implementing the requirements. In 2025, DG ECHO released a **booklet of good practice** and funded 3 new **innovation projects** aimed at **greening humanitarian aid** in 2025. Furthermore, EU/DG ECHO acts as Secretariat of the Humanitarian Aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment. The Secretariat published its **3rd annual progress report** in May 2025 whilst also working on **Common Donor Priority Actions for Greening Humanitarian Aid**, endorsed in June 2025. In the summer, DG ECHO launched an evaluation of its approach to reducing the environmental footprint of humanitarian aid (2020-2024).

A key part of DG ECHO's efforts to adapt to **climate change**, is through funding for **Disaster Preparedness**. The budget line steadily increases every year and reached **EUR 81 million** in 2025. Additionally, 1 out of 3 DG ECHO-funded projects included a preparedness component. DG ECHO is a signatory of the **Joint Communication on the Climate and Security Nexus** and is actively seeking to strengthen climate/environment peace and security nexus analysis of relevant policies and actions.

The external dimension of disaster preparedness was dominated by the implementation of the **EU-LAC Memorandum of Understanding**, and the **Administrative Arrangement** (AA) on disaster management with the **ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance**. A similar arrangement has been developed with India's National Disaster Management Authority during 2025, heading for signature in 2026. Other high-level engagements included the **G20 Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction** under South Africa's Presidency, and active involvement in the G7 Wildfire Technical Working Group to develop the Kananaskis Wildfire Charter.

DG ECHO uses all its civil protection tools available to respond to the adverse effects of climate change. In 2025, investment in early warning and information systems linked to climate-related hazards has continued. Stable contributions to the early warning component of the **Copernicus Emergency Management Service** enabled the upgrading and continuous uninterrupted operation of systems, despite increased needs (e.g. record burned areas in Europe stretching EFFIS capacities). As a part of a comprehensive process and analysis, two lessons learned meetings took place in 2025 focusing exclusively on operations caused by climate related hazards, identifying challenges and best practices for preparedness and response.

General Objective 6: A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships

Specific Objective 1: The EU remains a leading humanitarian donor by providing effective humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable.

By remaining a reliable and principled humanitarian actor, the EU contributed significantly to **EU's role as a global leader**. The current geopolitical context and the impacts of climate change are exacerbating tensions, fuelling existing conflicts and extending protracted crises. Continued violations of IHL and humanitarian access impediments makes delivery of humanitarian aid both difficult and dangerous. In addition, the significant humanitarian financial crisis reached an all-time low with the US suspending all aid in 2025. This has forced organisations to scale back or suspend operations, reducing life-saving assistance and has left affected populations even more vulnerable.

Over the years, through DG ECHO, the EU has developed several policies and guidance that outline the Commission's position on key issues. It ensures quality, coherence, and accountability of EU funded humanitarian operations. In 2025, DG ECHO continued to assure compliance and further development of these policies:

Acute food insecurity remains at record levels. Entering 2025, there were around [295 million people acutely food insecure](#), a historical record number, and a sixth consecutive annual increase. For the first time since the [IPC framework](#) was created, **famine** was confirmed in **two territories (Gaza and Sudan)** simultaneously. By the end of 2025 six countries/territories were considered of highest concern: Sudan, Gaza, South Sudan, Haiti, Mali and Yemen. In the face of global hunger, the EU managed to mobilise around **EUR 600 million** for food and nutrition assistance. This reaffirms EU's commitment to fighting hunger. In 2025, the EU updated its [Humanitarian Food and Livelihood Assistance Policy](#) and continued integrating nutrition services into basic healthcare by implementing the WHO Guidelines on **malnutrition and wasting**.



Figure 2: Malnutrition and disease outbreaks are adding to the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia.

Health is a core sector with a **EUR 400 million** allocation in 2025. The EU released its updated [Health Policy](#) in March. EU humanitarian funding supported existing health systems and provided access to basic medical care in emergencies, including mental health and reproductive health. The UCPM and ReliefEU complemented ongoing efforts to prevent and respond to epidemic outbreaks in Africa.

Protection of- and focus on the most vulnerable remained a key priority due to continued

breaches of IHL and the widespread instances of violence, deprivation, abuse. Children are exceptionally vulnerable and 2025 saw increasing numbers of grave violations against children in situation of armed conflicts. [Six grave violations against children](#) attained the highest number of instances reported since the UN Security Council-mandated monitoring began 20 years ago. Gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence has become a weapon of war. In

response, about **15% EU's humanitarian envelope was allocated to sectoral protection activities**. The EU remains committed to provide safe, dignified and inclusive programming, mainstreaming protection, gender and age considerations in all actions.

Education in emergencies (EiE) was deeply affected by the humanitarian funding crisis. The sector experienced a 33% global reduction in funding and a devastating 43% reduction in target population. Recognising education as a lifeline for more than 234 million children and young people, the EU realised its commitment to allocate 10% of the annual initial EU humanitarian aid budget to EiE. Funding in 2025 amounted to over **EUR 180 million**.

Building on the **Humanitarian Logistics Policy**, throughout 2025, the EU through DG ECHO spearheaded the Humanitarian Leadership Group on Supply Chain (HLGSC). Workshops on procurement, environmental sustainability, digitalisation and localisation were attended by representatives from the UN, INGOs, donors, academia, and the private sector. The process culminated in a High-level conference presided by Commissioner Lahbib. Participants agreed to work towards a collaborative and interoperable supply chain model that ensures increased efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

Examples of humanitarian crises to which DG ECHO responded in 2025

The EU, through DG ECHO, has successfully responded to crises in **110 countries** globally. This includes lifesaving assistance but also advocacy and coordination efforts in protracted crisis in the Horn of Africa, South Sudan, Yemen, Central African Republic and more. All efforts require constant adaptation and flexibility to cater to the volatile situation on the ground. Through DG ECHO's humanitarian aid operations, the EU contributes to multiple **Sustainable Development Goals**, including SDG1-7, SDG13, SDG15-17. The countries highlighted below reflect the breadth and diversity of DG ECHO operations but remain a selection of the many crises responded to.

The aftereffects in **the occupied Palestinian territory** of the 2023 terrorist attacks on Israel consist of large-scale destruction and suffering of unprecedented severity. The current ceasefire remains fragile, and despite slightly improved truck access, the entire population of Gaza (2.1 million) face security and protection risks. The EU is a leading donor in Palestine, having committed **EUR 220 million** for 2025. In addition to funding, it maintained operational support through 16 EU HAB flights and road cargo actions, delivering nearly 1 400 metric tonnes of assistance. The ERCC also continued to facilitate patient evacuations from Gaza, enabling the evacuation of 344 patients and 941 companions.

In 2025, **Syrian populations**, as well as Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities in neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, Egypt, and Iraq) received, through DG ECHO, the EU's unrelenting support. With 16.5 million people in need inside Syria, the focus was on life-saving and early recovery interventions, utilising an allocation of **over EUR 204 million**. This included top-ups to address the critical humanitarian needs in Northeast Syria and in the wake of hostilities and displacement of populations in Sweida, South Syria.

In **Afghanistan**, the humanitarian crisis remained among the most severe worldwide, with an alarming 21.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2025. Operations face increasing restrictions under Taliban rule, particularly affecting women's participation in aid delivery and access to essential services. Afghanistan is the only country in the world where

girls are denied access to school after the age of 12, impacting over 1.4 million girls. The EU provided lifesaving assistance worth **over EUR 161 million** and funded HAB flights, delivering 390 tonnes of medical relief items for humanitarian organisations in Afghanistan.

In **Yemen**, over 18.1 million people face food insecurity. Malnutrition among children and vulnerable groups is critically high. Renewed regional escalation, fragile governance made for a bleak 2025. Severe restrictions on-and detention of aid workers and unprecedented funding shortfalls increased operational constraints. The risk of aid politicisation is extremely high. In this context, the EU mobilised **EUR 120 million** and deployed large-scale EU HAB to provide critical medical and WASH supplies in Yemen.



Figure 3: Funded by the EU, DRC's Manual Mine Clearance team member examines the ground in Yemen with a metal detector.

The conflict in **Sudan** has resulted in the world's largest displacement crisis, with 10.06 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), making up 12% of all IDPs worldwide. In November the IPC confirmed ongoing famine North Darfur and in South Kordofan. The belligerents have committed massive IHL and human rights violations, including war crimes and likely crimes against humanity. In 2025, the EU allocated **over EUR 273 million** in response to the crisis (including over EUR 161 million in Sudan alone). DG ECHO also mobilised ReliefEU for warehousing and logistics support in Chad, at the border with Sudan, and through 14 EUHAB flights carrying nearly 1 200 metric tonnes of aid, of which 360 were from EU stocks.

The EU has also stayed engaged in the **Horn of Africa** (Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya). In 2025, dry conditions have returned to the region, with multiple failed rainy seasons just two years after the end of previous historic drought. Around 15 million people across the four countries are food insecure and nearly 10 million people are forcibly displaced. To respond to the most acute needs, in 2025 the EU allocated **EUR 157 million** on the Horn.

The **Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC) has experienced a dramatic escalation of conflict due to a large-scale offensive by the Rwanda-supported M23 rebels, in early 2025. Human rights, and IHL violations as well as widespread acts of GBV still occur daily. The extreme vulnerability of civilians justifies the holistic approach to GBV pursued by DG ECHO. As part of this response, EU funding provided, medical – and psychosocial support alongside emergency livelihoods for survivors and at-risk populations. The EU's response in the Great Lakes region constituted **EUR 129 million** in assistance funding and several EUHAB flights.

Crisis in **Central Sahel** is driven by conflict between armed groups and state forces. The warring parties commit recurrent violence against civilians, triggering forced displacements, into the Gulf of Guinea and Mauritania. In 2025, Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali) had 14.5 million people in need but due to funding shortages only 10 million were targeted for emergency assistance under UN coordination. Despite facing growing humanitarian access restrictions, the EU provided nearly **EUR 124 million** in humanitarian assistance. Food security and nutrition remained the dominant sectors in terms of funding.

In 2025, **Myanmar** was the scene of the second most violent in the world. They reported the highest number of landmine casualties. Approximately 20 million people were already

dependent on humanitarian assistance at the beginning of 2025. The 7.7 magnitude earthquake in March brought an additional 2 million people into humanitarian need. DG ECHO released additional funds, activated the UCPM, and sent over 1 000 metric tonnes of aid via multiple HABs. the EU allocated **EUR 55 million** to Myanmar in 2025. Additionally, in **Bangladesh**, Cox's Bazar is home to the world's largest refugee camp, hosting more than 1.2 million Rohingya refugees. The EU delivered nearly **EUR 39 million** in humanitarian aid to the Rohingya refugees and the host community in 2025.

Venezuela is one of the world's largest forgotten crises. 58,6% of the population face extreme poverty in a country where basic services have collapsed. A staggering 70% of the population do not have regular access to health services and clean water. Meanwhile, only 17% of the 2025 HRP was funded, the second-least funded worldwide. The cuts in US funding have resulted in drastic reductions of beneficiaries targeted (from 5.1 million beneficiaries to less than 1 million). The EU was the leading humanitarian donor in 2025, providing around 43% of total humanitarian funding, over **EUR 52 million**.

In 2025, the Commission created **ReliefEU**, a new humanitarian emergency response tool managed by the ERCC. ReliefEU merges the pre-existing European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) and the Emergency Toolbox. The tool aims to provide effective, efficient, and timely assistance ahead of a **predictable and immediate hazard**, in the **aftermath of a disaster**, or in protracted crises where operational gaps have been identified.

Over EUR 110 million was allocated for the operational activities of ReliefEU in 2025. **ReliefEU capacities** responded to **20 crises affecting 18 countries**, deploying its range of transportation services (127 flights chartered, 6 780 metric tonnes of aid transported, and 32 641 passengers carried with EU HAB Flights), its logistics, and mobilising its stocks (1 205 tonnes). ReliefEU championed Team Europe, cooperating with eight MS for joint operations ⁽¹¹⁾. Through DG ECHO, the EU, whilst managing existing capacities, developed a new stockpile in Barbados in 2025.

ReliefEU Funding includes two main emergency response tools: **ALERT** (All Emergencies Response Tools) and the support to the **IFRC's Disaster Emergency Fund** (DREF). ReliefEU funding was mobilised a total of **118 times in 60 countries**, providing a total of **EUR 53.5 million** in first-line emergency humanitarian funding during 2025. ALERT was activated 41 times in 26 countries to address the consequences of tropical cyclones, floods, epidemics, conflicts, earthquakes and droughts. In 2025, the EU supported **77 IFRC-DREF** operations and Emergency Appeals in **51 countries** making it the largest donor to the DREF.

Specific Objective 2: Humanitarian principles are respected, and humanitarian assistance remains needs based

Delivering rapid and flexible assistance both in major crises and in so-called **forgotten crises** has become a hallmark of the EU's profile as a donor. Given the protracted nature of most humanitarian crises, DG ECHO is pursuing a stronger link between urgent relief and longer-term solutions by addressing the **causes of fragility** and seek durable solutions in cooperation with development and peace actors. As mandated by President von der Leyen in the [Mission Letter](#)

⁽¹¹⁾ ES, FR, IE, SE for operations in Afghanistan, DRC, Palestine, Sudan.

to the Commissioner for quality, Preparedness, and Crisis Management, DG ECHO has led efforts to prepare the groundwork for an integrated approach to fragility, including through dedicated research and consultative process.

The EU's humanitarian action is an integral part of its commitment to **effective multilateralism**. The UN-centred global humanitarian model remains fully aligned with the EU's values and interests. Together with MS, the Commission is at the forefront of steering a transformative **Humanitarian Reset**, in alignment with the broader UN80 initiative. Further, The EU continued engaging in the **Grand Bargain** process. The share of multiyear funding reached nearly 14%, and new long-term programmes with OCHA and IFRC has been signed in 2025. DG ECHO adopted a new roadmap to channelling funds as directly as possible to local actors. During the second half of 2025, multiple processes to **simplify** operations began.

Bilaterally, **Cooperation with Canada** and **the Gulf** was strengthened in 2025. The EU through DG ECHO signed an AA with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada. The AA covers cooperation on humanitarian diplomacy, operational coordination, knowledge sharing and communications. Cooperation with the Gulf states was strengthened through both a region-to-region approach, as well as bilaterally. The approach culminated in the signature of an AA with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Emergency Management Centre on cooperation in disaster management and emergency response, as well as an AA with *Dubai Humanitarian* (public corporation based in the UAE) on supply chain and humanitarian logistics.

In today's armed conflicts, IHL violations remain widespread. Thus, the European Commission continued to advocate for a better enabling environment for principled humanitarian aid in the context of **increasing violations of IHL and growing impediments to principled humanitarian access**. In 2025, the EU pursued its systematic advocacy through public statements and interventions in multilateral forums and high-level events. In September, it organised a high-level event in the margins of the UN General Assembly Ministerial Week focusing on the inspirational and operational power of IHL.

The EU also provided **funding for IHL-related projects**. This included EUR 30 million supporting the International Committee of the Red Cross key programme for the prevention of IHL violations. At the EHF, the first "*IHL in Focus*" global annual report was presented, aiming to provide states, international organisations, civil society and academia with tools for IHL analysis to support advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy.

2. INTERNAL CONTROL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Management monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis and carries out an objective assessment of their efficiency and effectiveness. In annex 7, there is a list and details of the reports that have been considered. The results of the above assessment are explicitly documented and reported to the Director-General.

2.1. Control results

Management uses control results to support its assurance and reach a conclusion about the cost-effectiveness of those controls, meaning whether the right balance between the following elements is achieved:

- **Effectiveness** The level of error found, based on the controls carried out.
- **Efficiency** The average time taken to inform or pay.
- **Economy** The proportionality between the costs of controls and the funds managed.

2.1.1. Overview of the budget and relevant control systems (RCS)

DG ECHO implements Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection operations under Direct and Indirect Management. DG ECHO adapts its control systems to the specific risks of each control segment and ensures a proper implementation through multiple layers of checks and controls throughout the project cycle. These controls should altogether contribute to the overall reasonable assurance on the legality and regularity of transactions. DG ECHO puts emphasis on the implementation of effective and efficient financial and operational control of its activities that enable and provide assurance on activities implemented to achieve its policy objectives.

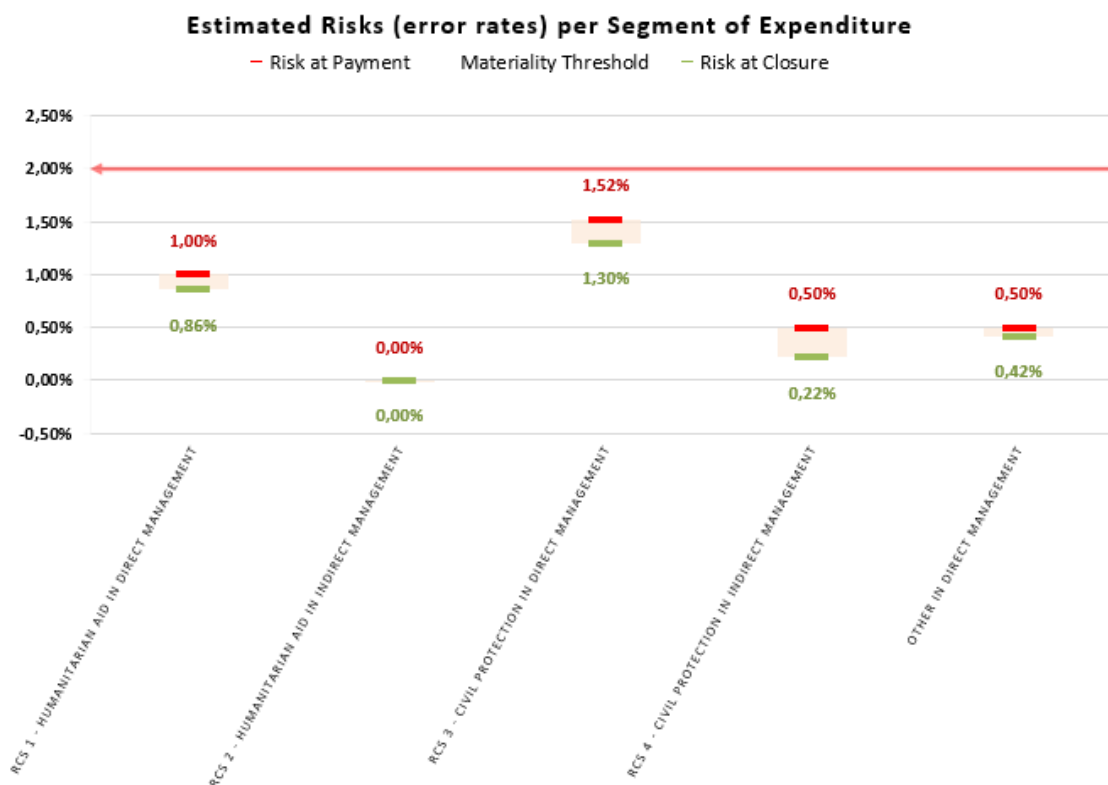
DG ECHO's 2025 budget amounted to EUR 2 839 million. Commitment appropriations originating from the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) strand amounted to EUR 2 830 million, of which EUR 2 574 million were allocated to humanitarian aid operations, EUR 238 million to civil protection and EUR 18 million for other prerogatives and support and administrative expenditure. Additionally, DG ECHO had at its disposal EUR 9 million for civil protection support expenditure coming from NGEU funds.

The level of payments amounted to EUR 2 830 million in 2025. 87% of all payments were related to humanitarian aid operations (EUR 2 479 million). Under Civil Protection, payments made in 2025 amounted to EUR 349 million. Moreover, EUR 3 million were paid for administrative and other external actions. On top of this, EUR 14 million payments came from European Development Fund (EDF).

Despite the challenging circumstances related to the management of the humanitarian aid and civil protection budget due to rapidly evolving and changing crisis and disaster landscape, DG ECHO maintained particularly good implementation rates as regards commitment and payment appropriations, achieving consumption of 99.8% for budgetary commitments and 99.4% for payments appropriations under the MFF funding.

2.1.2. Effectiveness of controls

a) Assessment of control results per segment of expenditure



Ex-post controls are performed on the basis of the 2021-2027 audit strategy with the objective of assessing the legality and regularity of financial transactions implemented by the DG (financial HQ audits), addressing specific DG ECHO risks through risk-based audits and assessing the Partners' compliance with eligibility rules, like DG ECHO 2021 Certificate for Humanitarian Aid operations.

DG ECHO's audit activities in 2025 were implemented in accordance with the plan, except three field audits cancelled due to the difficult security situation in South Sudan. Nevertheless, auditors could obtain sufficient evidence from the financial HQ audits completed in 2025 to draw conclusions in line with the auditing standards.

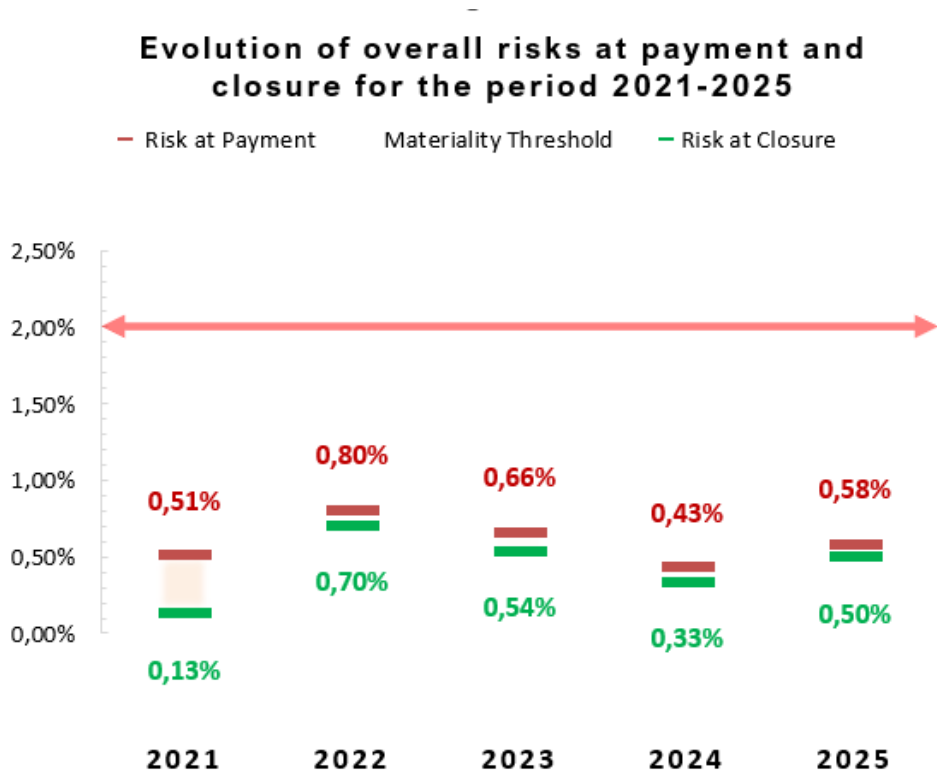
DG ECHO finalised audits of 38 randomly selected humanitarian aid projects implemented through direct management mode, with a total value of transactions tested amounting to EUR 64.6 million. For projects implemented under indirect management, 27 projects were audited, and no ineligible expenditure was detected for transactions tested totalling EUR 99.07 million. DG ECHO continued to apply a multi-annual approach for the calculation of the average detected error rates, as humanitarian aid activities have an overall stable set-up in terms of targeted beneficiaries, eligibility criteria, management and control modalities. Accordingly, based on the above audit findings, the average detected error rate amounts to respectively

0.9997% and 0% for projects implemented through direct management mode and indirect management.

As regards civil protection, DG ECHO has opted to apply a multi-annual approach to calculate the average detected error rates. This decision reflects the fact that civil protection activities are implemented throughout several years and have an overall stable set-up in terms of beneficiaries. DG ECHO has randomly selected audits for 15 projects implemented under direct management, which were finalised in 2025. The cumulative detected error was of 1.5218% applying a multi-annual approach ⁽¹²⁾.

DG ECHO will continue to closely monitor the evolution of the detected error rates and is prepared to review relevant control mechanisms if necessary.

b) Estimation of the overall risk at payment and risk at closure



The estimated overall risk at payment for 2025 expenditure is the AOD's best conservative estimate of the amount of relevant expenditure during the year that is not in conformity with the contractual and regulatory provisions applicable at the time the payment was made. A proportion of the underlying errors will be corrected in subsequent years and until the end of the programming cycle, corresponding to the conservatively estimated future corrections for

⁽¹²⁾ The multi-annual approach to error rate mitigates better the deviations either on payment side or on side of financial corrections/DER and, as the average number of audits per year is relatively low, it provides more representative picture of the situation.

2025 expenditure. The difference between the risk at payment and the estimated future corrections results in the estimated overall risk at closure ⁽¹³⁾.

There is a stable trend since 2023 mainly due to stabilizing controls and applying targeted measures to issues detected.

For an overview at Commission level, the departments' estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are consolidated in the AMPR.

In 2025, due to the transition to SUMMA, only preventive measures exceeding EUR 500,000 are reported.

c) Quantitative benefits of controls: Preventive and corrective measures

DG ECHO continued to perform ex-ante controls and ex-post controls as effective mechanisms for detecting and correcting errors. In 2025, due to the transition to SUMMA, only preventive measures (ex-ante controls) exceeding EUR 500,000 are reported. All corrections made by DG ECHO fall below this threshold and therefore, are outside the reporting scope. Ex-post controls resulted in corrective measures amounting to EUR 1.9 million.

DG ECHO works closely with other DGs to ensure a streamlined approach to the follow-up of Pillar Assessment of UN entities that have supervisory measures due to failing assessment of one or several pillars. Several follow-ups were launched and completed in 2025, as some of the UN entities/pillar-assessed International Organisations did implement the envisaged corrective measures. For the rest the supervisory measures continue to apply until the follow-up exercise will be completed.

d) Assessment of control results for non-expenditure items (if applicable)

N/A

e) Fraud: prevention, detection, and correction

DG ECHO has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2013, based on the methodology provided by OLAF. It is updated every 3-4 years and was last updated on 24/07/2025 following a fraud risk assessment. Its implementation is being monitored and reported to the management regularly. The implementation of the actions as specified in the new anti-fraud strategy's action plan is in progress; their completion is expected for the duration of the new anti-fraud strategy (2026-2028)

⁽¹³⁾ This is the AOD's best, conservative estimation of the expenditure authorised during the year that would remain not in conformity of applicable regulatory and contractual provisions by the end of implementation of the programme.

As co-lead service for action 24 of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy Action Plan of July 2023, DG ECHO has contributed to the drafting and dissemination of the *Guidance and best practices for Commission services on addressing the risks of conflict of interest* (publication April 2025).

Corrective measures based on OLAF recommendations are reported on in the context of annual monitoring exercises conducted by OLAF, in accordance with Article 11 of Regulation 883/2013 ⁽¹⁴⁾.

On the basis of the available information, DG ECHO has reasonable assurance that the anti-fraud measures in place are overall effective.

2.1.3. Efficiency of controls

The transition in 2025 to the Commission's new accounting system, SUMMA, has required the adjustment to a new system and has impacted budget implementation tasks, processes and financial management activities, particularly during the first part of the year. This has required careful management to ensure the same data quality as in previous years. In some cases, this may have resulted in lower performance for some standard financial indicators such as the timely payments (see Annex 4).

Regarding timely payments, the result of 96% achieved by DG ECHO is a positive result taking into consideration the continuous overall high volume of transactions over the past years as well as the complexity of DG ECHO operations. DG ECHO maintains its rate of timely payments stable through regular and standard checks on open invoices.

The average time to pay was of 22 days in 2025. For civil protection e-grants, the average time-to-grant was 208 days compared to the legal deadline of 275 days. The average time-to-inform was 103 days compared to the legal deadline of 183 days. Accordingly, both ratios were widely within the legal deadlines.

2.1.4. Economy of controls

DG ECHO's estimated cost of controls amounted to EUR 10.8 million (8.7 million ex ante – 2.1 million ex post) in 2025. It is composed of the cost for staff performing control activity functions both at HQ and in the Field as well as the eligible cost from relevant partners to produce their certificates of financial statements and the cost for audit assignments undertaken by external audit firms for outsourced audits (EUR 1.0 million). Costs of controls of entrusted entities are not included in this calculation. For further detail see Table Y in Annex 7.

The overall estimated cost of the control strategy represents 0.38% of the total payments ⁽¹⁵⁾ slightly higher when compared to the same rate in 2024 (0.33%). Thus, the costs of controls

⁽¹⁴⁾ [REGULATION \(EU, EURATOM\) No 883/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\) and repealing Regulation \(EC\) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation \(Euratom\) No 1074/1999](#)

⁽¹⁵⁾ 0.39 % of the humanitarian aid payments and 0.34% of the civil protection payments.

for DG ECHO in 2025 are below the benchmark of 0.5% of the total payments in 2025, and they are to be considered proportionate to the inherent risks of the activities performed by DG ECHO.

2.1.5. Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls

Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results reported above, DG ECHO has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of its control system and reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of the controls for which it is responsible. DG ECHO also assessed that the environment remained stable during 2025, critical risks remained the same and the control strategy was not changed. The Internal Control Monitoring Criteria was slightly adapted.

In terms of effectiveness, the ex-ante controls and the ex-post audits resulting from the implementation of the control strategy have enabled DG ECHO to detect non-eligible expenditure.

In terms of efficiency, it is essential to consider not only quantifiable impacts but also other benefits of the control systems, which, although unquantified, are equally important for understanding the full scope of their effectiveness:

- The preventive effect of limiting operations to those organisations that, after being duly assessed, have qualified to become a partner organisation.
- DG ECHO's ex-post audits, in addition to detecting non-eligible expenditure, give assurance on the partners internal controls as well as on their compliance with the contractual requirements, including non-financial aspects such as compliance with humanitarian aid principles, detection and management of misconduct, whether relating to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, or fraud.
- In addition to ex-post audits, DG ECHO carries out field audits of ongoing projects that contribute to partners' awareness and knowledge of the eligibility rules of claimed expenditure. The follow-up of fraud allegations is both qualitative (deterrent effect and assessment of partners' capacity to investigate) and quantitative (recovery of amounts affected by fraud).
- The deterrent effect of the implementation of both ex-ante controls and ex-post controls, leading to a limitation of the occurrence of non-eligible items and, more generally, to the promotion of sound financial management.
- Technical Assistants working in the DG ECHO Field Offices contribute to the assurance-building process by supporting budget implementation through both the needs assessment used for the allocation of funding and ensuring quality monitoring of the actions funded on the ground

2.2. Audit observations and recommendations

This section sets out briefly the state of play for all audit observations and recommendations reported by auditors related to internal control. Further details for IAS and ECA audits can be found in Annex 8.

Where an audit has detected weaknesses affecting an internal control principle or the department's assurance, a detailed analysis is provided further below in section 2.3 and 2.4, accordingly.

Internal Audit Service

No critical or very important recommendations identified in 2025.

European Court of Auditors

Reported	Audit Title	Accepted Recommendation	State of play in 2025	Impact on the assurance for 2025
2025	Special Report 15/2025 : EU humanitarian aid under remote management - Can save lives, but there are weaknesses in the approach	1. The Commission should: (a) define remote management and situations of partial remote management better in its guidance; (b) embed the risks linked to the remote management approach better in its risk register and update its control strategy to ensure that controls specifically address the risks linked to remote management; and (c) redesign its remote management templates and embed them in its IT systems.		
		2. As part of the NGO certification process, the Commission should: (a) assess the partners' capacity to identify, select, assess and monitor their local implementing partners to ensure adequate oversight. When NGO partners use family headquarters as implementing partners, the Commission should also: (b) obtain from the partner's independent auditor reasonable assurance on the technical and administrative capacity of the family headquarters.		

Reported	Audit Title	Accepted Recommendation	State of play in 2025	Impact on the assurance for 2025
2025	Follow-up of the Court's Recommendations made in its Special Report No 02/2021 "EU humanitarian aid for education: helps children in need, but should be longer-term and reach more girls"	3. The Commission should: (a) assess the criteria for approving funding for remotely managed action on the basis of sufficient information; (b) on a sample basis, verify the accuracy of the information reported by partners.	✓	✓
		1. Make greater use of the results of ERC projects	✓	✓
		2a. Inform partners to give priority to funding projects which target at least 50 % girls.	✓	✓
		2b. Include a standard indicator for the proportion of girls in the project.	✓	✓
		2c. Systematically monitor gender proportions and gender sensitivity of EU funded education projects.	✓	✓
		3a. Support educational projects for at least two years.	✓	✓
		3b. Define duration of education projects at the beginning of the action.	✓	✓
		4a. Compare the cost of the main activities with those of a similar project.	✓	✓
		4b. Compare the proportion of goods and services received by beneficiaries	✓	✓
		4c. Use the results of this cost analysis when selecting projects	✓	✓
		5. Strengthen the links with longer-term development programmes	✓	✓

State of play		Assurance	
✓	Action plan implemented	✓	No impact on the assurance
⌚	Action plan implementation is ongoing	🚩	Impact on the assurance
📝	Preparation of the action plan		

2.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems

The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework based on the highest international standards. ⁽¹⁶⁾ DG ECHO has adapted the Internal Control Framework to their specific characteristics and organisational structure. The internal control systems are suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives in accordance with the internal control principles, having due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

The assessment of the internal control system was carried out between September 2025 and February 2026. It included the review of the Internal Control Monitoring Criteria (ICMC) and considered results of audits and follow-up engagements performed by IAS and ECA. Furthermore, a dedicated survey was conducted in January 2026 with representatives of all staff levels for the evaluation of the ICMC. Overall, the results of this survey were positive, indicating the staff's overall good understanding of the control systems in place. It concluded on the need to undertake some additional targeted activities to further improve the staff awareness and knowledge of procedures, in particular related to the whistleblowing procedures and deviation reporting procedures.

During 2025, seven non-compliance events and ten exceptions were reported. DG ECHO thoroughly assessed all reported deviations, also considering the exceptional circumstances that made them indispensable and concluded that none of those affected the effectiveness of the internal control system.

DG ECHO's risk assessment performed in the last quarter of 2025 confirmed the two critical risks on 'access restrictions on DG ECHO's activities and controls' and 'security of DG ECHO staff'. Indeed, access restrictions continued to be high in several ongoing crisis theatres, affecting not only the humanitarian needs assessment and the delivery of aid, but also the field monitoring of the actions funded. DG ECHO established a remote management guidance to appropriately manage these risks. By the end of 2025, there were 33 actions fully or partially implemented under remote management, worth EUR 281.5 million, on-going in Sudan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Syria, Somalia, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Ukraine and Libya. Deployment of ReliefEU, diplomatic advocacy and outreach, or continued engagement in civil-military coordination are only a few examples of mitigating measures put in place to reduce the risk.

DG ECHO concluded that the internal control system is functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies were identified related to staff awareness and knowledge of procedures. The detected deficiencies have a low impact on the overall effectiveness of the control system and improvements and/or remedial measures are put in place.

⁽¹⁶⁾ The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission Internal Control Integrated Framework, the golden standard for internal control systems.

2.4. Conclusions on the assurance

The information reported in Section 2.1 stems from the results of management monitoring and auditors' opinion contained in the reports listed. These reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in a comprehensive coverage of the budget delegated to the Director-General of DG ECHO.

DG ECHO faces several inherent risks due to the nature of its operations, which can hinder the achievement of its objectives. The control architecture of DG ECHO aims to ensure that risks are mitigated to an acceptable level in a cost-effective manner. Taking into account the information reported in sub-sections 2.1-2.3, including the various reports from the internal and external control bodies, there is evidence that the internal control system in its entirety is implemented effectively in DG ECHO. The procedures put in place ensure the control of the main risks and in doing so provide reasonable assurance that the financial information in this report represents a true and fair view of DG ECHO's operations. Resources are used for their intended purpose and the AOD has managed them on the basis of the principles supporting sound financial management. Furthermore, the materiality criteria set for legality and regularity of the financial operations are respected, no significant information has been omitted, assets and information have been properly safeguarded, and measures were put in place to ensure prevention, detection and correction of fraud and irregularities.

In conclusion, based on the elements reported above, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, effective controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director-General, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

2.5. Declaration of Assurance [and reservations]

Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned,

Director-General of Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation.

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view ⁽¹⁷⁾.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the institution.

Brussels,

Maciej POPOWSKI

Qualified electronic signature by: HANS RENÉ

A DAS

Date 2026-03-30 16:21:30 UTC

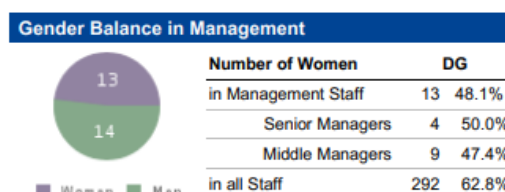
⁽¹⁷⁾ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the DG/Executive Agency.

3. A MODERN AND SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

3.1. Human resource management

DG ECHO is at the forefront of the EU's response to deteriorating emergencies around the world. It employs a competent and committed workforce delivering effectively on the Commission's objectives, priorities and core business. DG ECHO relies on its **Headquarters staff** and the **network of humanitarian experts in the field**.

At the end of 2025 all management positions are occupied, one middle manager being seconded from the EEAS. DG ECHO continued encouraging gender diversity, including in leadership, with balanced appointments for middle management. **Four out of five Director posts were occupied by women.**



The implementation of DG ECHO's equality mainstreaming work plan was regularly monitored by the Equality Working Group. The Management Charter, a key commitment to the basic shared values on which DG ECHO, was signed by all newly recruited managers in 2025.

DG ECHO continuously had been improving efficiencies in the use of human resources through reinforced coordination and strategic steer, better blend of civil protection and humanitarian aid work; **better focus on safety and security**, creating clearer entry points for highly strategic and cross-cutting issues, rebalancing the coverage of geographical units, and workload across units. In 2025 DG ECHO fulfilled the corporate internal staff redeployment objectives, and has reallocated staff as was needed and possible - to best serve DG ECHO priorities.

DG ECHO remains a fair and inclusive workplace embracing a holistic approach to wellbeing and work life balance. The local Action Plan, adopted in September 2024, following up to the latest Staff Survey, complements Commission corporate efforts. It reiterates existing guidelines and actions to future-proof the working environment at least until the end of 2026. The Human Resources Correspondent (HRC) runs a permanent **Listening Cell** primarily dedicated to career talks, creating a confidential space to discuss professional development of staff. DG ECHO HRC has successfully organised series of **monthly knowledge hours** related to **wellbeing, mental health or career development**, in cooperation with DG HR specialists. DG ECHO adopted a multi-annual Learning and Development plan (2024-2027) to ensure the ideal placement of staff in adequate positions.

3.2. Digital transformation and data management

DG ECHO has continued its **digital transformation** during 2025 by further developing and securing the Crisis Management information system, following the revision of the implementing act and the full revision of the security plan. This information system facilitates the coordination work of the ERCC. In the meantime, the modernisation of the **Marine Pollution information system** has been started in line with the digital strategy of the Commission to move from legacy development tools to cloud and open source tools. It has been complemented by the **Civil Protection data repository**, allowing users to easily access comprehensive reports and dashboards involving heterogeneous data sources among which Crisis Management and Marine Pollution data. Moreover, the modernisation of DG ECHO's two main information systems, HOPE and APPEL, has been finalised, migrating from the Coldfusion legacy to the new recommended tools. It has been done by reusing corporate building blocks like eUI (to ease development of Single Web Page Applications) to accelerate the development of a seamless digital landscape.

DG ECHO collaborates with other Commission Services on providing secure **AI-assisted knowledge management tools** for staff. We have strengthened the uptake of new collaborative technologies, launched an initiative to facilitate the adoption of the new data retention policy and the related data migration, and promoted AI training for staff and the use of Commission-wide general-purpose AI solutions (such as GPT@EC).

Security remained a top priority, with the revision of two IT security plans, CECIS MP using GOVSEC, the ERCC portal being less complex experimenting the use of the GRC risk module. In 2025, cyber awareness initiatives continued for staff, including for the Field Offices. The ECHO cyber aware ambassadors and a dedicated cybersecurity team for DG ECHO offered several cybersecurity activities. The cybersecurity team for the field network has been reinforced to cope with the numerous challenges and focus specifically on field-based staff. A cybersecurity corner has been created on the DG ECHO intranet website for staff.

DG ECHO's alignment with the **EC Digital Strategy** also means that data management is treated as a priority. In this context, DG ECHO joined the family initiative on enhanced data governance for the external relations family under the lead of DG INTPA with the objective of sharing experience and increasing the data maturity of all participants. A first work plan has been established for 2026.

Moreover, on data protection and data risks and responsibilities, tailored training and awareness raising activities have been organised on a quarterly basis for the staff and field staff of DG ECHO to reach a consolidated coverage (considering staff turn-over) beyond 90%. The DG ECHO Data Protection Corner is updated as needed.

On document management, DG ECHO has progressed in modernising the archiving procedures of its Field offices with the introduction of ARES in additional regional offices and drafted a procedure to automate the management of user rights.

Privacy statements were equally reviewed and updated, whereas new ones have been prepared for new and recurrent processing activities (i.e., for DG ECHO meetings, events, webinars, etc.). More specifically, in 2025, seven revised records and two new records (first versions) were published. DG ECHO has followed relevant legal and procedural developments and updated its 'Data Protection Corner' in DG ECHO's new **intranet SharePoint Online Platform**.

3.3 Sound environmental management

During 2025, DG ECHO contributed to achieving the **climate neutral by 2030** target by complying with EMAS requirements and advice. The “greening” of humanitarian aid also continued as part of DG ECHO's commitment to sound environmental management. A team of 7 motivated colleagues who drive initiatives to raise awareness about our climate impact, both in the office and at home. In 2025, DG ECHO endeavoured to further reduce its energy consumption by following the recommendations laid out in **the energy performance of buildings** (EPB) issued by the Belgian Authorities. Recommendations included following-up on EMAS action plans or temporary measures to reduce energy consumption, including actions to raise staff awareness on the matter. To reduce DG ECHO's footprint, a promoted encompassing tips to **save energy, organise sustainable meetings** and **reduce waste**.

DG ECHO aims as far as possible to reduce its emissions from missions but balances such initiatives with the **need for field monitoring** of its projects. Missions to third countries where infrastructure (such as railroads) are impacted by disaster is part of DG ECHO's modus operandi and will continue to be for the correct controls of EU humanitarian and civil protection funds to be implemented.

The technical projects related to buildings' operation, energy efficiency, waste management, catering and biodiversity are managed by the EMAS Site Coordinators teams in the Commission's Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels (OIB). DG ECHO staff are currently split between two buildings (L-86 and L-102). While DG ECHO is generally excluded from the summer building closures managed by OIB due to its 24/7 duty system, L-102 is taking part of the energy efficiency measures.

DG ECHO's EMAS team actively promotes energy-saving tips and sustainable practices for both the workplace and home through the **dedicated EMAS page on DG ECHO's intranet**. This platform is regularly updated with information sessions, activities, and events—including those organised by other Directorates-General—focusing on reducing climate impact.

In addition to digital communication, a physical whiteboard in the cafeteria is frequently updated with practical, low-emission tips on IT consumption, office climate impact, transportation, and waste reduction, offering a more immediate and accessible alternative to online articles. Beyond information-sharing, in 2025 the DG ECHO EMAS has organised several initiatives:

- A green volunteering session in collaboration with DG HR.
- Two quiz games during internal events, focusing on waste sorting and the water consumption of AI.
- A jogging activity with volunteer colleagues in the EU Quarter.