

Management Plan 2019

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)¹.

Commissioner Stylianides's mandate is 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. As outlined in DG ECHO Strategic Plan 2016-2020, the fulfilment of this mandate 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 priorities 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. This is especially true as humanitarian crises continue to increase in number, complexity and severity, including in Europe's wider neighbourhood.

The UCPM continues to be an important and effective tool to mobilise and coordinate assistance provided by Participating States to respond to crises. The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) is the operational heart of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Based on past experience, the Mechanism is expected to be activated at least 25 times or more, as the new legislative framework entering into force will bring additional financial incentives to using the Mechanism inside Europe.

As a result of climate change, natural disasters will become more unpredictable and extreme. To strengthen the current system of civil protection which has reached its limits, work is ongoing on the rescEU proposal, so that the EU invests more in response capacities and creates a "safety net" to be activated when national capacities are overwhelmed. rescEU transition assets, notably aerial firefighting capacity, will need to be operational as soon as possible. Through rescEU, Member States are also encouraged to make prevention and preparedness a priority and strengthen capacities (see below).

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, whilst respecting international law and the principles of impartiality, neutrality,

¹ 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).

humanity, non-discrimination and independence in line with the Treaty (Article 214 TFEU) as well as the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. DG ECHO's work in the area of humanitarian aid is based primarily on the Humanitarian Aid Regulation², which provides a flexible and effective framework for delivering the EU's humanitarian assistance³. In response to unprecedented humanitarian needs, the EU's planned initial humanitarian aid budget for 2019 stands at EUR 1.642 billion. Following the adoption of its Communication on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises on 18 May 2018⁴, the Commission will dedicate 10% of this amount to education in emergencies.

The UCPM coordinates the deployment of European Participating States' assets and expert teams in response to disasters both inside and outside the EU. The Mechanism also supports and complements the efforts of Member States in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness. The draft 2019 budget for the UCPM is EUR 53.9 billion. In light of recent disasters, the Commission is proposing a significant strengthening of the UCPM accompanied by a total overall increase in the UCPM financial envelope of EUR 200 billion for 2019-2020. The follow-up to the legislative proposal and rapid implementation thereof will continue to be a top priority for DG ECHO in 2019.

DG ECHO is also responsible for providing emergency support within the Union⁵ to address the humanitarian impact of natural and manmade disasters in the EU. The Emergency Support Instrument's criteria have led to assistance being deployed in Greece since 2016 in the context of the refugee crisis. The instrument's activation will expire in 2019, with support to Greek authorities continuing via other EU instruments.

Finally, DG ECHO is responsible for managing the EU Aid Volunteers initiative⁶, which brings together volunteers and organisations notably to provide support to humanitarian aid projects. In this context, DG ECHO also contributes to the set-up of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC)⁷ for which the regulation was adopted on 2 October 2018⁸.

In its work outlined above, DG ECHO attaches great importance to effective coordination with other relevant actors. While the EU and its Member States are the world's largest humanitarian donors, coordination with strategic partners is essential and striving for greater efficiency in aid delivery will again be an overriding theme in 2019.

² Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid (OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1).

³ Comprehensive evaluation of the European Union humanitarian aid, 2012-2016

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/Communication_on_Education_in_Emergencies_and_Protracted_Crises.pdf

⁵ 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).

⁶ 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).

⁷ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4165_en.htm/

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2018/1475 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 laying down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and amending Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 and Decision No 1313/2013/EU

PART 1. MAIN OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

Part 1 of the Management Plan highlights the key deliverables that DG ECHO will implement in 2019 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, in line with its strong commitment to the fundamental principles of humanitarian aid and respect for International Humanitarian Law. Moreover, in 2019, 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, forced displacement, gender). DG ECHO will notably continue to act as coordinator with respect to the EU's self-reporting⁹ on the commitments made at the Summit.

In 2019, DG ECHO will continue playing a leading role by chairing for the EU two donor groups; the Donor Support Group of the ICRC, and the Good Humanitarian Donorship group that will be chaired until mid-2020 together with Switzerland.

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 decision¹⁰. The methodology used for the allocation of funding is governed by the Index for Risk Management (INFORM), the Crisis Assessment, the Forgotten Crisis Assessment and the Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF). Strategic funding decisions are reflected in the Worldwide Decision for 2019 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

⁹ Through the UN PACT platform: <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/annual-report/5545>.

¹⁰ Commission Implementing Decision financing humanitarian aid operational priorities from the general budget of the European Union, also known as 'Worldwide Decision' (WWD).

WHS¹¹ .

The Grand Bargain consists of 51 commitments taken by its 59 signatories, comprising both donors and aid organisations. The 51 commitments were initially 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, Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements, Strengthening engagement between humanitarian and development actors. Following the June 2018 Annual Review of the Grand Bargain, 11 of the 51 commitments have been prioritised, while work streams have been rationalised to become 8¹² (by integrating nexus in the other work streams and by merging multi-year funding and earmarking work streams).

Specifically, DG ECHO is testing the Grand Bargain (and the 'quid-pro-quo' it envisages between greater transparency and effectiveness by agencies and simplification by donors) through one major pilot project on the ground, while using the opportunity of the FPA review to assess possibilities of introducing further reforms. DG ECHO continues to co-lead the Grand Bargain work stream on needs assessments together with UNOCHA, with the aim of presenting a set of technical outputs for decision makers during the World Bank Spring Meeting, tools that are necessary to improve needs assessments to enable swifter, better coordinated and more efficient aid delivery. Internally, the revision of the FPA should allow DG ECHO to meet other important commitments of the Bargain.

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 humanitarian-development frameworks (JHDFs) 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 2017¹³, calls for stronger humanitarian-development coordination (nexus), with a strong emphasis on anticipation, prevention and preparedness. In 2019, the EU Nexus pilot process involving six countries (Chad,

¹¹ <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

¹² The final work streams are: Transparency, Localisation, Cash, Duplication and management costs, Needs assessment, Participation revolution, Multi-year planning/funding and reduced earmarking, and Reporting.

¹³ 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

Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda) will be in its final stage. Lessons learnt and good practices will be disseminated in order to systematise a humanitarian-development Nexus approach in closer coordination with political/peace objectives in major protracted crises contexts. Any Nexus approach should be based on joint analysis of risk and vulnerabilities of a given context.

3. Thematic policy priorities

Education in Emergencies

Education in the context of humanitarian action can provide immediate physical, psychological and cognitive protection during crises and it is a major contributor to individual, community and societal resilience. Access to safe and quality education – combined with the provision of lifesaving skills, social and emotional learning, and psycho-social support – can help children to cope with, and recover from, crises. By creating safe spaces, education can not only reduce vulnerabilities related for example to sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage, early pregnancy, child labour and forced recruitment but also provide a vital venue for the delivery of child protection, child safeguarding to children.

Education in emergencies (EiE) actions are essential to help to prevent, reduce, mitigate and respond to emergency-related academic, financial, social, institutional, and physical/infrastructural barriers to children's education, and ensure the provision of safe, inclusive and quality education. DG ECHO will provide EiE funding in the framework and strategic priorities set out in the Commission Communication on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises of 18 May 2018. In line with the funding commitment put forward in the Communication, DG ECHO will dedicate 10% of EU humanitarian aid to EiE, supporting formal and non-formal education at the primary and secondary levels of education. DG ECHO's actions will focus on out-of-school and forcibly displaced children, as well as children belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

In order to support the implementation of the policy framework specifically by EU humanitarian aid, DG ECHO aims to produce an operational guidance by early 2019 that sets out the objectives and key actions it will support. At the same time, in the spirit of the Communication that foresees effective coordination among the full array of relevant EU instruments to support education in crisis contexts, DG ECHO will continue to deepen its cooperation with other EU services that fund education measures in third countries (e.g. DG DEVCO and DG NEAR). The Council adopted Conclusions on education in emergencies and protracted crises on 26 November that provide a firm foundation for closer coordination with Member States as well.

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 evidence base is extensive and shows that cash-based responses are an efficient and effective way to deliver humanitarian assistance, ultimately ensuring that more assistance directly reaches affected populations.

The EU is leading the way among the world's humanitarian donor in the use of cash a modality of choice, when appropriate to the context. DG ECHO has also been in the vanguard of donors advocating for a greater use of this modality, as 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.

In 2017, over 35% of the EU humanitarian assistance was delivered in the form of cash, as per our Grand Bargain commitments. Among the countries where we are delivering the biggest amounts of humanitarian cash assistance are Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan and Greece. In 2019, DG ECHO aims to maintain the level of delivery at 35% of its assistance in the form of cash transfers. As for other modalities of delivering humanitarian assistance, such as in-kind assistance, particular attention is given to risk mitigation.

Innovation and Digitalisation

The humanitarian sector needs to find new ways to serve affected populations in a fast changing world. New, innovative approaches must be factored in and new actors must be involved. Innovation and the use of digital technologies can play an important role in addressing humanitarian challenges with greater cost-effectiveness. DG ECHO will continue supporting the development of innovative approaches such as the enhanced use of biometrics to provide identities to beneficiaries in particular in cash programmes. Synergies will be exploited between digital developments and improved needs assessments, assistance delivery, cash programme and identity management. In so doing, data sharing and protection concerns will have to be taken into account "in light of the GDPR.

Additionally, DG ECHO will explore opportunities offered by EU research and innovation programmes. In line with the commitment made at the World Humanitarian Summit, DG ECHO will also continue promoting a more effective involvement of the private sector in humanitarian contexts. Public-private partnerships can support the co-creation of innovative humanitarian solutions with greater cost-effectiveness and create opportunities to leverage additional resources.

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. DG ECHO chairmanship of this initiative lasted until the end of 2018, with notable progress made¹⁴ on the identified priorities of advocacy, prevention, strong field-level engagement, and implementation of the Commission's commitments. In 2019 DG ECHO will continue to deliver on these commitments in cooperation with other services active on gender and gender-based violence (DG DEVCO, DG NEAR and EEAS), continuing to engage in related international

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/call_to_action_on_protection_from_gender_based_violence_in_emergencies_en.pdf

fora, and in particular remain active with regards to the priority of bringing the Call to Action closer to the field within the broader Call to Action initiative.

4. Disaster Risk Management

Upon the entry into force of the new legislative framework underpinning the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, DG ECHO will be required to ensure its implementation. The immediate priority stemming therefrom is the need to rapidly establish rescEU capacities in order to complement national means and enhance the EU's overall capacity to respond to recurrent disasters and to emerging risks. The European Commission, in close cooperation with Member States, will ensure strategic decision-making over rescEU capacities in order to support countries hit by disasters such as floods, forest fires, earthquakes and epidemics.

The first rescEU capacities, which shall consist of aerial forest fire fighting means, will need to be operational by mid-2019 in order to allow for their use in the next forest fire season. In order to do so, DG ECHO will prioritise the preparation, negotiation and adoption of relevant tertiary legislation as well as the conclusion of necessary procurement procedures and financial arrangements. This will be a key focus for action in 2019.

In line with its coordinating role of the civil protection response to disasters and emergencies, DG ECHO will continue to help deliver rapid and efficient governmental aid in the immediate aftermath of disasters, based on the Emergency Response Coordination Centre 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 2019 will be to follow up on the risk management capability assessment and risk assessment reports received from Participating States in 2018. Another priority will be the implementation of the peer reviews programme, used to improve Participating States' disaster risk management (following the three peer reviews conducted in 2018, three more peer reviews will be organised in 2019). The need to ensure cross-sectorial cooperation in disaster risk management, firmly placing the UCPM at the heart of this process, should also be pursued as a priority. This is particularly important giving the growing danger of hybrid threats.

Civil protection expenditure in 2019 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.). Single country direct grants supporting Member States with activities aiming to improve disaster risk management planning at national or subnational level will be implemented.

In 2019, a continued programme of registering and certifying Participating States' pre-committed response capacities will be pursued, including through modules exercises.

Increasing the number of module types 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. To ensure swift and proper implementation of the latter, as well as to respond to the needs stemming from the new legislative framework (including increased Union support for Member States assets committed either to the European Civil Protection Pool or to the rescEU reserve), DG ECHO will recruit additional HQ personnel where needed.

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 proposal¹⁵ is the creation of **rescEU**, a reserve at European level of civil protection capabilities such as aerial forest fighting assets, field hospitals and emergency medical teams, as well as medical evacuation. These will aim to complement national assets and will be managed by the European Commission in close cooperation with Member States 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 2019. Making rescEU reserves operational before the start of the forest fires season in 2019 is a top priority.

In 2019, 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.

Fostering international cooperation in civil protection shall also be considered a DG ECHO priority for 2019. A meeting of Civil Protection Director Generals of Union for Mediterranean States will be organised in the first quarter of 2019 upon the request of Commissioner Stylianides. The intention is to bring international partners closer to the Mechanism, with a particular focus on Neighbourhood and IPA countries. DG ECHO will also be required to assess how best to implement the new possibilities offered in this field by the UCPM's revised legislative framework.

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.

¹⁵ 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).

Through early action and a focus on preparedness, DG ECHO seeks to preserve livelihoods and build resilience of affected populations. DG ECHO funded Disaster Preparedness (DP) programmes aim at reducing the impact of natural disasters on populations and allowing early warning, early action and a local response. 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 of enhancing synergies between humanitarian and development operations in turn leading to less suffering, less losses and a durable recovery. In 2019, 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.

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 2019, 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 2019, DG ECHO will continue to actively promote the implementation of the Action Plan on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030¹⁶, 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 2019, DG ECHO will continue to coordinate the Sendai Framework's implementation and monitoring within the Commission and lead and contribute to the policy dialogue on disaster risk reduction with EU Member States, United Nations, civil society and private sector.

¹⁶ SWD(2016) 205 final/2.

In order to ensure strong representation and advocacy of disaster risk management policy and approaches, DG ECHO will also coordinate the European Commission's engagement at the sixth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Geneva in May 2019.

DG ECHO will also continue to support the implementation of 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 24 and COP 25).

DG ECHO will maintain relations with the UN and other international organisations to promote global implementation of the Sendai Framework.

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 investments.

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 2019, 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 user needs in areas such as good practice exchange, risk assessment, early warning systems and development of methodologies.

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 2019 EU Aid Volunteers Annual Work Programme include, among other things, the selection, training and deployment of 450 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 2019, emphasis will continue to be put on awareness-raising to potential beneficiaries and volunteers 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.

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
Main outputs in 2019:		
Delivery on legislative proposals pending with the legislator		
Output	Indicator	Target
All new initiatives / significant evaluations from the Commission Work Programme		
Output	Indicator	Target
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>For a complete listing of expenditure-related outputs please refer to the Programme Statements published together with the Draft Budget for 2019.</i>		
Output	Indicator	Target
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"> – Middle East: € 347.5 m – Eastern Neighbourhood € 616.8 – North, West and Central Africa: € 166.7 m – Sudan & South Sudan, Horn of Africa, Great Lakes, Southern Africa, Indian Ocean € 208.5 m – EU Trust Fund for Africa: € 10 m¹⁷ – South Asia & Pacific: € 75 m – Central & South America and Caribbean: € 29.5 m Complementary operations: € 21.7 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: Philippines, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Pakistan, Algeria, Burundi region, Central	15% of initial planned budget is spent in forgotten crises

¹⁷ Annual contribution as part of the pledged EUR 50 million, to be allocated over five years and strictly earmarked for the resilience objective of the EUTF

	African Republic region, Mali region, Sahel, Sudan, Colombia, Haiti, Venezuela, Central America	
Budget is allocated to Education in Emergencies (EiE) as a priority area	Percentage of the 2019 operational budget spent on Education in Emergencies worldwide	10% of initial adopted humanitarian 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
Civil Protection prevention and preparedness projects are implemented within and outside the EU	Grants are awarded Public contracts are awarded (either through calls for tenders or under existing framework contracts)	Up to 12 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 Civil Protection Pool	Number of types of modules, Technical Assistance and Support Team (TAST) and other response capacities registered	Around 15 additional modules/response capacities registered in ECPT
EU Transport and operational co financing supports the deployment of assistance delivered via the UCPM	Most transport of the assistance delivered through the UCPM is co-financed. In addition, the UCPM will be financing also operational costs of modules deployed via either the ECPP or the rescEU reserve.	At least 75 % of eligible transport operations and operational costs under the UCPM of more than 500 km are co- financed by the EU.
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
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
Set-up of the rescEU reserve of response assets	A rescEU reserve initially consisting of aerial forest firefighting assets will be established, hosted by Member States and managed by the Commission in close consultation with the Member States owning the assets.	At least 8 additional forest fire fighting assets to become rescEU transition assets.

Specific objective: People and communities at risk of disasters are resilient		Related to spending programmes: Humanitarian Aid, Union Civil Protection Mechanism, EU Aid Volunteers
Main outputs in 2019:		
Delivery on legislative proposals pending with the legislator		
Output	Indicator	Target
All new initiatives / significant evaluations from the Commission Work Programme		
Output	Indicator	Target
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>For a complete listing of expenditure-related outputs please refer to the Programme Statements published together with the Draft Budget for 2019.</i>		
Output	Indicator	Target
Civil Protection projects and exercises are implemented in IPA II and EU Neighbourhood countries	Implementation of IPA II and Neighbourhood programme	up to 3 Civil Protection projects 1 CP exercise
EU Aid Volunteers are trained and deployed	Number of EU Aid Volunteers trained and deployed	450 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.	70 hosting and sending organisations selected in the 2019 call for proposals
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
DRR is mainstreamed in humanitarian aid operations	Percentage of humanitarian aid projects with preparedness for response and early action mainstreamed	50% humanitarian aid projects
Second review of Sendai Action Plan completed	Implementation of Sendai Action Plan Activities	At least 40% 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 crises affected by forced displacement 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 68.5 million refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons) by the end of 2017. The Commission is committed to providing support to displaced populations and their host communities. The Commission is also committed to supporting more sustainable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement once the conditions for those durable solutions are in place. In 2019, 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. In line with the Commission Communication "Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance"¹⁸, close cooperation with DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, the EEAS and the EU Member States will continue to operationalise this policy framework and ensure more dignified and sustainable response to forced displacement situations. This work will also contribute to the implementation of the Global Refugee Compact, to be adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2018.

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. 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 as well as promote urban resilience

1. Syria Crisis

DG ECHO will continue addressing the needs inside Syria as well as the needs of Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities in neighbouring countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq). **Inside Syria**, where 13 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 2018. In Syria, DG ECHO will maintain its focus on multi-sectoral life-saving actions, with a focus on emergency response and preparedness, protection and health. In **Lebanon** and **Jordan**, accounting for the two world highest refugee populations per capita, DG ECHO activities will focus on protection, basic needs assistance and Education in Emergencies for 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 130 000 Syrian refugees account for approximately 56% of the registered refugee caseload in country, DG ECHO will continue to focus on protection and education.

The number of refugees in **Turkey** exceeds 3.9 million, making Turkey the largest refugee hosting country in the world. DG ECHO will continue implementing the humanitarian leg of the second tranche of the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, which in

¹⁸ COM(2016) 234 final.

addition to funding from the EU budget also includes assigned revenue provided by the Member States. DG ECHO will continue supporting vulnerable refugees through the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), a single-card social assistance scheme that will allow around 1.4 million refugees to cover their basic needs. The implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education project will continue and allow at least 368 000 children to benefit from this largest-ever education in emergencies programme. In addition, DG ECHO will fund humanitarian projects in the areas of primary health care, including physical rehabilitation and mental health, non-formal education and protection. DG ECHO will focus on working with DG NEAR and the Turkish authorities on transition.

2. Western Balkans

In the beginning of 2018, the so-called "coastal sub-route" emerged, through which refugees and migrants have been transiting from northern Greece, through Albania and Montenegro or through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to reach Croatia and Slovenia. Should there be a new significant influx of refugees and migrants in the Western Balkans in 2019, there would be a need for additional support to humanitarian operations there.

3. Iraq

DG ECHO will continue to provide critical lifesaving assistance in the country, where 8.7 million people currently require humanitarian aid including over 2 million internally displaced civilians. The EU's humanitarian support will continue to provide aid and protection for populations affected by the conflict, and will strengthen advocacy for their protection. Targeted humanitarian aid will be provided in 2019, 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 be increasingly 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.

4. Inside EU

In parallel to the provision of assistance to persons of concern in relevant third countries, it is crucial to address the most urgent 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 were made available for the period 2016-2018 to provide emergency support in Member States affected by the migration and refugee crisis, with Greece being the only Member State meeting the criteria for support as set out in ESI. In early 2019 the objective is to hand over the emergency response to other Commission instruments and increasingly to the Greek authorities.

To support the overall 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.

By 17 March 2019, the Commission will submit an evaluation of the operation of ESI, together with suggestions for the future of the ESI Regulation to the Council.

Relevant general objective: 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 / ESI
Main outputs in 2019:		
Delivery on legislative proposals pending with the legislator		
Output	Indicator	Target
All new initiatives / significant evaluations from the Commission Work Programme		
Output	Indicator	Target
Completed evaluation of the operations of ESI	Submission of EU Commission report to EU Council	17/03/2019
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>For a complete listing of expenditure-related outputs please refer to the Programme Statements published together with the <u>Draft Budget for 2019</u>.</i>		
Output	Indicator	Target
Effective completion of the ESI activation for Greece and coordinated handover to the Greek authorities and other services of the Commission (DG HOME)	Successful implementation of last ESI projects until March 2019 and seamless handover to other EU instruments / Greek authorities	Full implementation of ESI funds Regular local coordination meetings with partners, DG HOME and Greek authorities
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 trimester 2019
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
Budget is dedicated for project components targeting	Budget for Syria-Iraq crises; Facility for Refugees in Turkey Support to the refugees and migrants in	€ 290 m € 600 m € 1.8 m

refugees/forced displacement situations	the Western Balkans Response through Africa Trust Fund	€ 10 m ¹⁹
Communication on forced displacement and development is disseminated and implemented	Operationalisation of the new approach in an increasing number of countries Dissemination and operationalisation of the joint operational guidance on forced displacement and development ²⁰	By the end of 2019
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 efficiency²¹. DG ECHO will ensure in 2019 that appropriate follow-up be given to the negotiations of the Commission's proposal²² with the European Parliament and the Council and their possible outcome. 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 create a stronger European civil protection capacity, **rescEU**. As aerial forest fire fighting capacities were identified as priority, the Commission will start constituting rescEU forest fire fighting assets as from 2019. As the market of forest fire fighting capacities is currently limited, the Commission will work with Member States to create a rescEU transition pool in 2019, and simultaneously start the work for

¹⁹ Annual contribution as part of the pledged EUR 50 million, to be allocated over five years and strictly earmarked for the resilience objective of the EUTF

²⁰ Ares(2018)3907334 - 23/07/2018

²¹ 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'.

²² 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).

constituting rescEU proper. This will include identifying other asset categories where a common European pool is necessary.

As co-financing rates for the European Civil Protection Pool (currently known as European Emergency Response Capacity, EERC) will also increase, we expect a high number of applications to certify assets from Participating States.

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. As from 2019, the Commission will be better able to base its scenario-planning 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. The Commission will in 2019 create a coordinated, flexible and purpose-oriented grouping of stakeholders to work together to exchange and gain knowledge about Civil Protection, in particular the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, and Disaster Management (DM) matters to increase preparedness.

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 2019 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 2019 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 2019, 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 2019, 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 2019 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 2019. 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 2019, DG ECHO expects three table-top exercises and nine module exercises 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 full-scale exercises in 2019 either within or outside the EU.

EU Solidarity Corps

DG ECHO will continue to contribute to the policy, legislative and programme development of the current European Solidarity Corps (2018-2020) and will also continue to support the integration of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative into the Corps from 2021. 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, there is scope for 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.

In 2018, 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 under the new MFF 2021-2027 and the accompanying ex-ante evaluation. The proposal for a regulation is currently under negotiation for adoption by the European Parliament and the Council.

DG ECHO will continue to contribute to the development of the implementing rules for the integration of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative into the European Solidarity Corps, for example, with a view to the Quality Label, rules on safety and security of volunteers, the transition of the EU Aid Volunteers Platform into the Youth Portal, the training of volunteers, etc. to prepare a smooth transition as soon as the legislators have taken their final decision about the integration.

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 programme: Union Civil Protection Mechanism
Main outputs in 2019:		
Delivery on legislative proposals pending with the legislator		
Output	Indicator	Target
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 6 months of the adoption of the decision and availability of appropriations
Adoption of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Solidarity Corps programme and repealing [European Solidarity Corps Regulation] and Regulation (EU) No 375/2014	Adopted Regulation published (EU Aid Volunteers Regulation repealed from 1.1.2021).	3 rd quarter 2019
All new initiatives / significant evaluations from the Commission Work Programme		
Output	Indicator	Target
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>For a complete listing of expenditure-related outputs please refer to the Programme Statements published together with the Draft Budget for 2019.</i>		
Output	Indicator	Target
Budget is allocated for disaster prevention	Percentage of Civil Protection budget contributing to disaster prevention	20% of CP budget
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target

PART 2. MAIN ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

A. Human resource management

In 2019, DG ECHO will continue to work together with DG HR on the full roll out of the new HR delivery model. In addition to further improvements at corporate level, adaptations to the internal processes of DG ECHO are still necessary and need to be implemented and fine-tuned throughout the year. As this will cause additional workload for the middle managers and their teams, the HRBC will focus on training and efficiency gains as much as possible.

In 2019, DG ECHO will also continue to assess the achievement of the effective Human Resource management objectives described in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 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 2018 staff survey.

In addition, DG ECHO needs to prepare an effective new structure that can deliver on the responsibilities put upon the Commission by the new proposal amending the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (rescEU) which is foreseen to come with a reinforcement of human resources of around 100 FTE and possibly 15 redeployments. On that basis, a reorganisation of DG ECHO would need to take place in 2019 and related training and information activities need to be organised in order to render this change as smooth as possible. The reorganisation would include the creation of a new Directorate and 4 new units, therefore a new management retreat shall be organised after all new management posts have been filled.

DG ECHO has reached the required quantitative target of first female appointments to middle management functions in 2018. 10 out of 17 Heads of Unit posts are now held by women, which corresponds to 59% of DG ECHO's middle management population. For Senior Management positions, the female representation reaches even 60%. DG ECHO will continue to pay special attention to women applications also in the future with a particular focus on the Deputy Head of Unit posts, that can be considered as a stepping stone for future middle management positions, and for which the percentage of women is at 41%. DG ECHO will also continue motivating and supporting the career development of women with a potential and interest for a management role, notably by identifying talented and interested female staff members and guiding them to adequate training activities.

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

Another important point in this context is stress management and quality of office accommodation. DG ECHO's work is by its nature a continuous reaction to crisis situations which are all extremely urgent and stressful. In addition, an increasing number of crisis have to be handled with constant resources. Therefore, DG ECHO will continue to pay particular attention to stress prevention, stress reduction and stress management.

Special attention will be given to further professionalization as well as motivation of support staff.

The office space is of particular concern to DG ECHO staff. Despite the recent renovation of the building's front, the quality of the office space could still be improved. In addition, when DG ECHO grows, staff may need to be spread over several buildings. Special attention will be paid to good planning and communication in this context.

DG ECHO has further completed the action plan that was drawn up after the last staff survey. On the basis of the new staff survey, which will take place before the end of the year 2018, DG ECHO will analyse and amend its action plan if needed.

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 2019.

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 objectives.

The internal communication strategy aims at increasing transparency, information flows and strengthening the dialogue between DG ECHO management and staff, mainly by organising periodical lunch time sessions and video messages by senior management. These internal communication activities shall always address topical matters. Thereby, they also contribute to the information flow between management and staff during the process of reorganization and benefit both staff members who newly joined and those who already work for the DG. The ongoing reworking of the DG ECHO Intranet will be continued and result in improved access to information in order to support staff in their daily tasks. Internal communication will also promote good public administration principles as defined by the European Ombudsman and clear writing, including trainings and clear writing tips for all staff.

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 2019:

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 	The 45% target of female representation in middle management has been reached in 2018. DG ECHO will continue to support female talents. Increase of female Deputy Heads of Unit to at least 50%.
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. Widest possible satisfaction of staff. Staff should recognise that their concerns are taken seriously care of. 2. One (1) fit@work strategy targeted to DG's needs is designed by the end of 2019 3. 100% of DG ECHO HQ and field staff, who go on mission to high-risk areas, security trained.
Action plan as follow-up of staff opinion survey 2018	Approval of action plan by Director-General	By end of Q2 2019
Prepare DG ECHO for new responsibilities in the field of civil protection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reorganisation of DG ECHO to create the necessary structures and integration of new staff 2. Provide satisfactory office space for staff after the reorganisation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of reorganisation by February 2019, recruitment of new staff in time for the forest fire summer season 2019. 2. Together with OIB find adequate office space for ECHO colleagues that allows them to work efficiently and as a team.
DG ECHO intranet is read by its staff.	Number of visits to DG ECHO Intranet per month, divided by DG population (web analytics).	30 visits per staff member per month.
DG ECHO staff takes part in lunch time conferences, co-organised by D2, with senior management.	Number of attendees.	At least 60% of Brussels-based DG ECHO staff to attend one lunch time conference in 2019.
DG ECHO staff watches video addresses by senior management.	Number of video views.	Each video address viewed by at least 15% of Brussels-based DG ECHO staff.
DG ECHO staff applies for the Good Administration and Clear Writing awards.	Number of submissions.	At least one application from DG ECHO for each award.

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 non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The process starts with the assessment of NGOs who apply to become FPA (Framework Partnership Agreement) partners. NGOs could apply for the signature of the 2014 FPA with DG ECHO until end of March 2018 if they complied 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 2018, 21 non-governmental organisations applied for the signature of the FPA with DG ECHO. In the same year, 4 organisations were granted partnership following assessment of their applications while 15 applications were rejected (these figures include applications submitted in 2016-2017). In 2019, 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 Exceptional Extreme Operational Constraints (EEOC) and remote management mode, not be possible due to problems of access, security and other constraints. These procedures include clear requirements to be respected by our partners before and during the implementation of these operations as well as at reporting stage. Therefore, ex ante and ex post controls apply equally to such operations. 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 2019, audits will be undertaken to cover humanitarian aid and civil protection budget expenditure. Following the 'Sexual exploitation and abuse' scandals that affected the humanitarian community, DG ECHO decided to reinforce the assessment of its partners safeguarding policies and procedures, through both ex-ante desk reviews and audits. In 2018, DG ECHO has launched pilot compliance audits, with the aim to assess its partners' compliance with the rules and requirements set in the Framework Partnership Agreement.

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 2018²³, the average time to pay was 34 days and 88% of payments were executed within the legal time. To maintain and improve this performance where possible in 2019, 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)²⁴, DG ECHO will continue the annual assessment of its operating procedures against the new ICF in 2019, 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.

²³ Situation at 30.09.2018

²⁴ 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 2019:

Output	Indicator	Target
Expenditure budget is subject to ex-ante controls	Percentage annual budget covered by ex-ante controls	> 100%
Expenditure budget is subject to ex-post controls	Percentage annual budget covered by ex-post controls ²⁵	≥ 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 2019:

Output	Indicator	Target
The costs of control over funds managed is maintained	% costs of controls over funds managed	< 2%
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 %

²⁵ According to DG ECHO's Audit strategy 2016-2020.

Implementation of the new Internal Control Framework (ICF)	Completion status of the implementation of the revised internal control framework	100%
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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 2019

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
When relevant, integration of anti-fraud efforts in new policy development	Integration of anti-fraud controls in ECHO policies	When relevant, done in all new policies

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.

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 2019, DG ECHO will further develop its data warehouse and associated reporting tools, keeping the focus on data quality. The progressive enrichment of the reporting infrastructure will provide new reports and respond to emerging needs while linking together data originating from various sources including external sources. The benefits are manifold, from the continuation of the rationalisation process with the phasing out of additional outdated reports and data stores to the provision of a unique location to search for information about DG ECHO's humanitarian aid activities. This will contribute to the provision of verified and quality data. Awareness actions and training will continue to be offered on a regular basis, in order to ensure wide and correct usage of the tools.

DG ECHO will continue its collaboration with the DGs of External Relations family and share information in a structured format allowing, among other, the automation of the OECD reporting. Additionally, the EU AID Explorer portal, which will provide information on Development and Humanitarian Aid, will benefit from this real time exchange of data.

DG ECHO is involved in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). This initiative has resulted in the definition of a data standard for exchanging structured, open and reusable data around development and humanitarian aid activities. In 2019, DG ECHO will extend its publication to new elements by adopting the latest version of the standard. DG ECHO will follow up the pilot project of UN OCHA which consist of sharing data among IATI members using the IATI data standard and thus achieving the IATI goal of "publish data once, use it often". In that context, we will enable the use of IATI data published by the EU Member States to feed the European Emergency Disaster Response Information System and avoid double encoding.

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 have been updated to access relevant registered documents from Ares (extended in 2018) and the components to create, register and file documents in Ares are ready for deployment. 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. This integration needs to be continued in 2019 in the context of the adaptation of the Information systems to the new Framework Partnership Agreements of DG ECHO to cover additional processes.

Further, on document management, DG ECHO promotes the on-line administration internally and externally. In 2017, several internal processes were automated, and paperless policy was strengthened.

The effort will continue in 2018-2019, by adding electronic signatures and thus completing the automation of processes, relating to payments end-to-end.

Objective: Data, information and knowledge in your DG is available, retrievable and shared. Important documents are registered and filed.

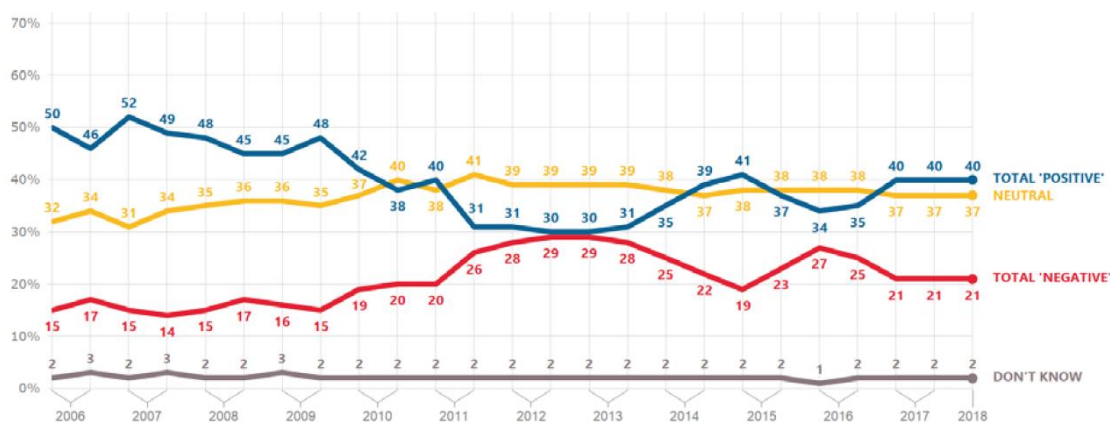
Main outputs in 2019:

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).	Address the data needed to produce 2 to 4 new reports
Staff has access to streamlined statistical data and reports.	Rationalisation of the reporting portfolio (front-end).	Phase out of 1 to 2 old reporting universes
Staff has access to reliable reports.	Increased use of the reporting tools	Migrate/Redesign 6 to 10 reports from obsolete to up-to-date reporting environment (corresponding to 33% of HOPE standard reports)
Staff is aware of the existing reporting capabilities.	Information sessions, support and trainings are provided.	4 to 6 awareness sessions All operational units visited
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

The Commission's overall communication objectives are that citizens (i) know about their rights in the EU, (ii) feel that their concerns are taken into consideration in European decision making, (iii) perceive that the EU is working to improve their lives, and (iv) engage with the EU. The Commission uses the indicator 'positive image of the EU' for measuring the impact of its communication activities. According to the latest standard Eurobarometer, published in June 2018, the European Union has for 40% of citizens a positive image – around half way between its high (52%) in 2007 and its low (30%) in 2013.

QA9 In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image? (% - EU)



Besides contributing to the implementation of the Commission's overall, corporate communication priorities, DG ECHO's primary communication objective is the effective communication on the humanitarian aid and civil protection actions of the EU and to promote the leading role of the European Union in humanitarian aid and in disaster response in line with the Commission's political priority "EU as a stronger global actor" in responding to global challenges and crisis in the neighbourhood and beyond. Communication in sudden onset and large-scale emergencies (such as fighting forest fires in Sweden or responding to Ebola outbreak in DRC) always takes priority over other communication activities. The secondary communication objective is to promote DG ECHO's advocacy activities and raising awareness and promoting humanitarian principles, International Humanitarian Law, education in emergencies, protection against gender based violence, EU Aid Volunteers and strengthening of the civil protection mechanism.

Annual communication spending:

Baseline (2018)	Estimated commitments (2019)
€4.0 million	€4.4 million

With an overall budget of €4.4 million in 2019, DG ECHO will reach out to citizens and journalists with a mix of earned, owned and paid media:

- **Earned media:**
 DG ECHO will maintain its engagement with mainstream media, principally through (i) assisting the spokespersons' service, (ii) releasing local press releases in cooperation with commission representations and EU delegations, (iii) organising visits by European journalists to EU-funded projects and, (iv) through a continuing engagement with Euronews for our regular magazine called 'AidZone'.
- **Owned media:**
 DG ECHO's main owned media are its website and its social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Flickr. These will continue to host high-quality stories from the field which offer unique angles on ongoing projects. In addition, DG ECHO will continue its travelling exhibition called 'EU SAVES LIVES', offering citizens an extremely immersive experience through the use of virtual reality.

- Paid media:

Paid media focusses on social media marketing and at expanding the reach of DG ECHO's large reservoir of audio-visual material.

In addition, DG ECHO works closely together with DG COMM to transport its messages through corporate communication channels. This concerns especially the corporate communication campaign "EU Protects" on which DG ECHO contributes content and contacts, for example, with regards to our work to fight wild fires in Europe and the Ebola virus in Africa. In addition, DG ECHO will continue with the "EU Saves Lives" campaign – a virtual reality roadshow that will travel across additional eight European cities in 2019. "EU Saves Lives" campaign is a spin-off of the "EU Protects" corporate campaign and illustrates how the EU helps to protect in case of emergencies (e.g. natural disasters) and save lives in Europe and worldwide. It combines the online promotion component with the virtual reality exhibition traveling across Europe. DG ECHO will also support DG COMM in communicating together ahead of the European elections and in encouraging EU citizens to make use of their prerogative and to cast their votes on 23-26 May 2019.

DG ECHO will also in its external communications showcase the positive results of education in emergencies projects funded by the EU over the past five years, with the help of increased funding by 10% for education in emergencies. This action too can be seen within the scope of EU Protects, since it concerns providing safe environment for children who have been thrown into unpredictable situations due to disasters or wars. External communications in this area will also be linked with Commission President Juncker's plan for a new EU-Africa alliance for sustainable investments in jobs as it showcases the commitment to promote education and job opportunities beyond our borders.

DG ECHO also aims to contribute to the upcoming corporate campaign on EU-Africa with concrete stories of EU funded projects empowering African people for instance by supporting education in emergency situations. DG ECHO also has a tight co-operation with the EU's humanitarian aid partners to raise the visibility of EU-funded projects through (i) on-site signage, (ii) media relations and social media promotion, and (iii) project-based communication grants known as 'above standard visibility actions'.

Objective: Citizens perceive that the EU is working to improve their lives and engage with the EU. They feel that their concerns are taken into consideration in European decision making and they know about their rights in the EU.

Main outputs in 2019:

Output	Indicator	Target
Citizens and journalists read the commission's media releases concerning civil protection and humanitarian aid.	Number of online views of media releases.	n/a.
Journalists visit EU actions in civil protection and humanitarian aid.	Number of participating journalists.	40.
Citizens watch 'AidZone' episodes on	Number views per 'AidZone' episode.	2 million.

the Euronews TV channel.		
Citizens read articles on ECHO website.	Number of visits.	1.1 million.
Citizens follow the ECHO accounts on social media.	Number of social media followers.	Increase by 20%.
Citizens have been served posts on ECHO's Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts.	Number of impressions.	85 million.
Citizens see video clips on ECHO's YouTube channel.	Number of views.	10 million.
Citizens in seven European cities visit the EU SAVES LIVES virtual reality roadshow.	Number of visitors.	350,000.

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

DG ECHO is continuing to roll out the use of more cost-effective ways of delivering humanitarian assistance, in particular through the use of multi-purpose cash transfers.

In 2019, DG ECHO will furthermore start implementing the review of its Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with NGO partners which will notably focus on a more strategic and results-oriented partnership with humanitarian actors. Some piloting should enable progress towards a further improved aid efficiency as well as more efficient contracting relations with partners.

In addition, DG ECHO will continue performing an integration analysis in view of using electronic tools for grant management ('eGrant') for the Humanitarian aid projects as well as for the remaining programmes in the civil protection area.