



Management Plan 2021

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

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for the year	4
The overall context	4
The main tools and regulatory framework	6
External communication and visibility	7
A. DG ECHO objective 1: General objective 4: A Stronger Europe in the World	8
B. DG ECHO objective 2: General objective 1: A European Green Deal	24
C. DG ECHO objective 3: General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life	27
PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year	31
A. Human resource management	32
B. Sound financial management	35
C. Fraud risk management	37
D. Digital transformation and information management	39
E. Sound environmental management	42
F. Example(s) of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities	43

INTRODUCTION

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

The starting point for the 2020-2024 cycle is the political agenda of President von der Leyen, as set out in her political guidelines and further developed in the mission letters sent to Members of the Commission. Commissioner Lenarčič's mandate is to deliver quick and relevant humanitarian aid and civil protection assistance to alleviate humanitarian crises around the world, working closely with EU Member States, United Nations (UN) partners, NGOs and civil society. Commissioner Lenarčič in his role as European Emergency Response Coordinator ensures, with the support of DG ECHO, that the European Union has the tools and the capacity – both for Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection – to respond swiftly and efficiently whenever our Union is called upon, whether here in the European Union or beyond.

The task for all Commission services is to translate these priorities into concrete and operational strategies that will shape their work for the duration of the mandate of this Commission. As outlined in DG ECHO Strategic Plan 2020-2024, the fulfilment of this mandate directly supports the achievement of three political priorities of the Commission's President von der Leyen: 1) A stronger Europe in the world; 2) A European Green Deal; 3) Promoting our European Way of life.

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

The massive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is unquestionable not only in Europe but worldwide. Responding to its effects and preparing for tomorrow will require determination as the outbreak happened in an already very difficult context of rising international tensions. Existing regional conflicts and protracted crises are often exacerbated by a contested multilateral order as well as the immediate and structural challenges caused by climate change.

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for the year

The overall context

The primary role of the Directorate-General for 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 man-made 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.

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 actions**. The humanitarian-development and, where relevant, -peace nexus is complex and requires timely and adequate involvement of all relevant instruments. This is especially important as humanitarian crises continue to increase in duration, number, complexity and severity, including in Europe's neighbourhood. In 2021, 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This number has risen to 1 in 33 people worldwide – a significant increase from 1 in 45 at the launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) 2020, which was already the highest figure in decades².

In the area of civil protection, cross-sectoral cooperation is paramount. This is not only applicable to the response phase, where time is of the essence, but also in the prevention and preparedness phases to increase the resilience of affected populations. DG ECHO ensures consistency in its activities with other Commission services, and encourages Member States to do the same at national level.

The **Union Civil Protection Mechanism (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 UCPM.

Throughout 2020, it has been repeatedly clear that wherever and whenever **European solidarity** is needed, DG ECHO has stepped in to provide it. In 2021, DG ECHO will continue to be on the frontline of the **response to the COVID-19 outbreak** [using its tools and capacities to respond] both inside and outside the EU.

¹ UCPM Decision 1313/2013

² Global Humanitarian Overview – <https://www.unocha.org/global-humanitarian-overview-2021>

In the internal dimension, in particular in view of the current situation of the pandemic, DG ECHO will continue supporting Member States most heavily affected through the delivery of personal protective equipment and medical equipment under the framework of the rescEU stockpiling. By November 2020, the rescEU stockpile was mobilised to deliver 30 ventilators to Czechia to reinforce the medical capacities of the country, and to provide urgently needed personnel protective equipment in form of over 600 thousands masks, 50 thousand gowns and more than one million medical gloves in 8 countries³. DG ECHO strives to ensure that European solidarity reaches all Member States when needed, and goes beyond our borders when possible.

In 2021, the emergency medical stockpile under the rescEU reserve will continue to be developed with full EU financing according to the needs expressed by Member States. Moreover, DG ECHO will continue leading the Mobility Package under the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) framework, so as to facilitate transport of cargo of medical equipment and relief items, with EUR 150 million already allocated to this strand; the transfer of medical teams from third countries into the EU and within the EU, such as for instance the support provided to Italy during the peak of the first wave, as well as transfer of patients within Europe and to neighbouring countries. Under the same framework, DG ECHO proposed a new initiative, the 'EU Emergency Cargo Corridor', bringing together Member States' cargo needs to increase efficiency and EU added value. DG ECHO will also be ready to support with the different tools at its disposal the global efforts related to the transport of the future COVID-19 vaccine, working hand in hand with other Commission relevant services, as well as with the pharmaceutical companies. DG ECHO will make use of all the tools at its disposal as appropriate to support the future COVID-19 vaccine in reaching third countries in optimal conditions and making sure no one is left behind. The main challenge remains to ensure fast delivery by appropriately allocating human resources and setting up new structures. It is paramount to ensure complementarity between the UCPM, including rescEU, and the activities under the ESI. The preparedness and response to humanitarian needs resulting from the pandemic is an important element of the external dimension of the EU support. The European Commission will continue mobilising support swiftly to respond in a coordinated manner to the needs in third countries, applying a Team Europe approach.

In 2021, the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge (HAB) will remain an available emergency response tool that could be re-activated in case of need. The EU HAB was initially activated in 2020 to allow Member States and humanitarian partners to transport humanitarian staff and supplies to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and to maintain the flow of humanitarian assistance, hampered by the pandemic. In 2020, the EU HAB organised 67 flights, delivered over 1,150 tons of vital medical and humanitarian equipment, and transported over 1,700 medical and humanitarian staff and other passengers. EU HAB assisted 20 countries

³ Spain, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and France.

globally, including the world's worst humanitarian crises⁴. Thanks to the effective collaboration of EU institutions and Member States, it proved to be a concrete and vibrant example of the 'Team Europe' approach in practice⁵.

In 2021, DG ECHO will continue to factor in both the direct and secondary consequences of COVID-19, e.g., also in view of the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on already vulnerable populations. DG ECHO will therefore integrate COVID-19 considerations in its 2021 humanitarian response strategy and keep advocating for a robustly coordinated response, focusing on the populations most in need.

The main tools and regulatory framework

With regard to 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 humanitarian aid is managed in the most effective and efficient way, whilst respecting international law and the principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity, non-discrimination and independence in line with the Treaty (Article 214 TFEU) as well as the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid⁶. DG ECHO's work in the area of humanitarian aid is based primarily on the Humanitarian Aid Regulation⁷, which provides a flexible and effective framework for delivering the EU's humanitarian assistance. In response to unprecedented humanitarian needs, and based on the draft 2021 EU budget, the planned initial **humanitarian aid budget for 2021 stands at EUR 1,492 million**.

The UCPM coordinates the deployment of European Participating States' assets and expert teams in response to disasters both inside and outside the EU. The UCPM also supports and complements the efforts of Member States in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness. The draft 2021 **budget for the UCPM is EUR 769 million**. In 2021, building on the experience in the COVID-19 pandemic, DG ECHO will continue working towards strengthening the current system of civil protection. A key priority will be the conclusion of the negotiations on the Commission proposal presented in June 2020 to

⁴ EU HAB operations took place in West Africa (i.e. Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, Chad, Nigeria and Ivory Coast), Central Africa (i.e. CAR, DRC) and East Africa (i.e. Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia –African Union), in Arabic, English, French and Portuguese speaking countries. Operations also took place in Latin America (i.e. Haiti, Venezuela and Peru), Middle East (i.e. Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon) and Asia (i.e. Iran and Afghanistan).

⁵ 11 Member States actively participated in EU HAB: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden

⁶ The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid – Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission – 2008/C 25/01 https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus_en.pdf

⁷ Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid (OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1).

further enhance the UCPM⁸. In the event that negotiations are not concluded by the end of 2020, the Commission expects that the dialogues with the co-legislators leading to the adoption of the amending decision can be successfully finalised at the beginning of 2021.

In parallel to the legislative work, DG ECHO will continue striving to further develop rescEU capacities in the field of forest fires, medical emergencies, as well as for CBRN incidents. Significant efforts will continue to be made on further developing the strategic stockpiling of critical equipment for medical emergencies, such as personal protective equipment (e.g. masks and gowns), medical equipment, testing kits and vaccines. The overall objective is to create a "safety net" to be activated when national capacities are overwhelmed. The European Civil Protection Pool (ECP) will be further consolidated and strengthened with the approval of new capacities.

In the context of the re-activation of the **Emergency Support Instrument**⁹ (ESI), a first Financing Decision was adopted on 24 April 2020 to support the implementation of activities under the instrument. DG ECHO was entrusted with **EUR 220 million** to implement the so-called 'Mobility package' (covering cargo operations and transports of medical teams and patients). From the initial allocation, EUR 150 million were allocated to support the transport of medical and other related equipment from third countries to the EU. Out of this amount, EUR 70 million are still available to be implemented in 2021, with priority given to the transfer of patients and medical teams across the EU and from third countries, providing concrete and life-saving support to European citizens when they most desperately need it. Projects based on the enhancing of the EU added value, efficiency and solidarity between Member States, such as the above-mentioned "EU Emergency Cargo Corridor", are being assessed to be rolled out next year.

External communication and visibility

In order to clearly demonstrate the European added value of the activities implemented by the EU, it is necessary to strengthen the visibility of EU actions in the field of humanitarian aid and civil protection. DG ECHO's communication actions will support the Commission's overall principles of transparency, accountability and dialogue with the citizens, and will link with corporate communication campaigns and narratives, around, in particular, the Recovery Plan for Europe, the European Green Deal, A Stronger Europe in the World and Team Europe. DG ECHO will continue its efforts to increase media attention to EU humanitarian aid, for example by facilitating journalists' visits in the field. Public awareness campaigns (involving media advertising, partnerships with public events, etc.) will enhance visibility among a broad segment of society in targeted EU Member States. The roll-out of

⁸ COM(2020) 220 final

⁹ The Commission adopted the proposal to re-activate the ESI on 2 April 2020. COM(2020) 175 final, which was adopted by the European Council on 14 April 2020 and the European Parliament on 17 April 2020.

rescEU, the Emergency Support Instrument and the prevention and preparedness actions under the Recovery Plan for Europe, will also be a main strand of work. General communication actions (press and media work, social media and online communication, including innovative online actions) will convey progress made on the initiatives and the actions achieved to a wider public, while targeted information campaigns will reach those most directly affected (such as populations in forest-fire prone regions). EU visibility and communication arrangements with humanitarian partners and the national authorities involved will be an important cornerstone of the communication strategy.


DG ECHO's communication channel mix will continue to prioritise digital media, also reflecting the adapted media consumption by EU citizens during the Coronavirus crisis. In 2021, DG ECHO will also set up new partnerships with national media outlets. On a more continuous basis, DG ECHO's website and social media channels will engage with EU citizens through up-to-date information, factsheets, audio-visual material and background stories.

A new Eurobarometer report, to be published early 2021, will give an updated baseline of the EU citizens' awareness and endorsement for the Commission's civil protection and humanitarian aid operations.

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

DG ECHO's work contributes significantly to the Union's global leadership. In 2021, DG ECHO will continue providing relief and support to the most vulnerable people suffering from conflicts and disasters across the world, through the mobilisation of both humanitarian aid and European civil protection assistance.

In line with President von der Leyen's priority to champion multilateralism and a rules-based global order through a more active role and stronger voice for the EU in the world, DG ECHO will continue to contribute actively to shaping humanitarian advocacy and policy development at the European and global levels.

In 2021, DG ECHO will propose a **Communication on the EU's humanitarian aid**, part of the 2021 Commission Work Programme , which will set out policy priorities for EU humanitarian aid to better adapt to the new global geopolitical and humanitarian context. This will help consolidate the EU's leading role as a principled donor and geopolitical player, as well as set out innovative ways of working, aiming to support more people in need, with a strong focus on efficiency and value for money and work with other EU instruments in a nexus approach.

DG ECHO will continue shaping EU relations with major UN humanitarian partners, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), as well as with major International NGOs. DG ECHO will also keep coordinating the EU preparation for participation in governing body meetings

of UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, with – among other – the preparation of statements and outreach to EU Member States as per established coordination procedures; it will hold strategic dialogues with its main partners.

EU involvement will continue in the negotiations on the normative frameworks for humanitarian action at UN level, cooperation with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and with operational UN agencies, representation in the Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and humanitarian events in the margins of the UN General Assembly.

Furthermore, DG ECHO will continue playing a leading role in different donor support groups, including the Donor Support Group of ICRC and the Donor Advisory Group of IFRC, which DG ECHO will co-chair in 2021. Furthermore, DG ECHO and Switzerland will co-chair the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative until mid-2021. Building on the achievements in the past years and with the view to further increase the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid actions, DG ECHO will continue its engagement in the relevant work streams aiming at addressing the Grand Bargain commitments. DG ECHO will also contribute to the reflections on the post-2021 future of the Grand Bargain, and will continue to take part in the Facilitation Group thereof and chair the latter from December 2020 to January 2021.

The UCPM also includes a strong external dimension in the area of disaster prevention, preparedness and response. This dimension materialises in emergency aid via rapid deployments of in-kind assistance, modules and expertise to requesting third countries, programmatic support to Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood countries, policy dialogue and sharing of expertise with emergency management authorities and relevant international organisations across the globe, as well as capacity building through prevention and preparedness missions.

At the forefront of the response in the aftermath of natural and man-made disasters, DG ECHO will continue providing assistance to the affected countries and populations and seeking good complementarity between humanitarian aid and civil protection.

In addition, DG ECHO will continue using the full potential of its Emergency Toolbox. The Emergency Toolbox comprises four instruments designed to provide a first line of emergency humanitarian assistance to sudden-onset crises that could not be foreseen in DG ECHO's humanitarian implementation plans. It makes funding available very rapidly to help addressing urgent needs in the aftermath of a disaster. The initial budget earmarked for the Emergency Toolbox in 2021 will amount to EUR 20 million¹⁰.

¹⁰ The Emergency Toolbox is composed of ALERT (Acute Large Emergency Response Tool), Epidemics Tool, Small-scale tool and DREF. For 2020, the Emergency Toolbox funding was of EUR 18 million, which was increased throughout the year with additional EUR 48,7 million.

In 2021, DG ECHO aims to increase awareness, understanding of and support for humanitarian issues, especially among audiences in Europe and in third countries where the Union is funding major humanitarian operations, by organising high impact public awareness, information and communication actions. These also serve to highlight the partnership between DG ECHO and its partners in delivering relief assistance to people affected by humanitarian crises. Humanitarian partners implementing the EU-funded projects continue to play an essential role in this communication strategy, not only by giving visibility to the specific actions, but also by setting up larger-scale communication campaigns.

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

DG ECHO is committed to providing adequate and effective humanitarian assistance to populations affected by natural or man-made disasters on the basis of needs. DG ECHO will continue to prioritise an integrated multi-sectoral or cross-sectoral approach to programming that aims to meet/contribute to the basic needs of affected populations, with a focus on the most vulnerable.

Given the ever-increasing needs and limited resources, aid effectiveness and result-oriented actions will remain priority. This will be one of the key elements of the new Communication on the EU's humanitarian aid. The focus will remain on continuing progress on commitments taken under the Grand Bargain, notably on more flexible funding (programmatic partnership, increased efficiency), impartial needs assessment, and simplification of reporting. The Communication will also contribute to the post 2021 Grand Bargain process.

In line with Grand Bargain commitments, DG ECHO will continue piloting Programmatic Partnerships with four NGOs and looking to launch new pilots with other categories of partners. Where necessary, DG ECHO will further disseminate, implement and update existing thematic policies which may contribute to increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. The first contributions to Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), made at the end of 2019, which mark an important evolution in the delivery mode of DG ECHO, will be assessed in the course of 2021.

DG ECHO's role as a lead donor is reinforced by its support to common evidence base tools such as INFORM Severity and Risk Indexes produced by the JRC for use by many humanitarian organisations. DG ECHO continues also to lead in multilateral high-level discussions, and during programme implementation in the field, on matters relating to greater effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid.

Also as part of its aid effectiveness and efficiency agenda, DG ECHO will continue to support the development of innovative solutions and approaches, in cooperation with a wide range of actors, including the private sector and the scientific community. DG ECHO

will keep using the latest scientific expertise and tools to anticipate and prepare as much as possible for natural disasters in vulnerable areas and affected countries; it will continue offering situational awareness analyses and scientific reports to the humanitarian aid community.

Thematic policy priorities

Over the years, the DG ECHO has developed a number of policies/guidance documents in areas such as protection, gender, health, food, shelter, disability, etc. These documents outline the Commission's position on key international frameworks and standards and provide concrete recommendations to its implementing partners on programming. The overall objective is to ensure quality, coherence and accountability of EU funded humanitarian operations. In 2021, DG ECHO will continue to make sure that the policies are applied in EU funded humanitarian operations.

Protection and focus on the most vulnerable

The continued prevalence of breaches of International Humanitarian Law and the widespread risks and instances of violence, deprivation and abuse in today's crises have made humanitarian protection a key concern in today's humanitarian contexts. In 2021, DG ECHO will continue making **protection** a priority in its humanitarian assistance, in line with the provisions of the Commission's Staff Working Document 'Humanitarian Protection: Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises'. DG ECHO will be involved in the preparation of the **Joint Communication on a strategic approach to support disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants** included in the Commission Work Programme (CWP) for 2021.

Humanitarian crises have a different impact on women, girls, boys and men. Their differentiated needs and specific vulnerabilities during and in the aftermath of crises need to be addressed accordingly. A response that does not integrate gender and age considerations risks not reaching those most in need, or even inadvertently doing harm. DG ECHO will continue **mainstreaming gender and age** across all sectors, **and advance the implementation of the approach to gender and gender-based violence in humanitarian crises** outlined in the Staff Working Document 'Gender: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance' and the DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker. This work is in line with and will contribute to the implementation of the new EU Gender Action Plan II 2021-2024.

The EU will also remain an active member of the **Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies** initiative and will make commitments to the new Road Map adopted in 2020. In operational terms, DG ECHO will continue to support prevention and response to sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV) through targeted actions.

Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by natural and man-made disasters. They also face multiple barriers in accessing humanitarian services, such as

water, shelter or food and may have specific protection needs. In 2021, DG ECHO will continue work to ensure the implementation of the Operational Guidance on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations. DG ECHO will also be involved in the preparation of the new **EU Disability Strategy** included in the CWP for 2021.

Education in Emergencies

Children make up more than half of the people affected by humanitarian crises and many of them miss out on education: half of the world's out-of-school children live in crisis-affected contexts. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the access to education on an unprecedented scale¹¹, impacting most the vulnerable children. Yet, education is [crucial for] is key for a better future. It provides the protection and the healthy development of all girls and boys. It can rebuild their lives, restore their sense of normality and safety, and equip them with important life skills. Therefore, DG ECHO will continue its Education in Emergencies (EiE) actions across the world, and at the same indicative target rate as in 2020, dedicating 10% of EU humanitarian aid to this priority. The overall aim of these actions is to restore and maintain access to safe, quality and inclusive education during humanitarian crises, and to support out-of-school children to quickly enter or return to quality learning opportunities.

DG ECHO will continue to provide funding to support formal and non-formal education at the primary and secondary levels of education, in line with its policy framework¹². DG ECHO will promote integrated and innovative solutions to ensure that children have equitable access to quality learning in all contexts and at all stages of education.

DG ECHO will also be involved in the preparation of the **new EU strategy on the rights of the child** included in the CWP for 2021.

Cash as delivery modality

In line with the Grand Bargain commitments, DG ECHO will continue to encourage the use of cash transfers whenever appropriate. Cash transfers provide affected populations with choice, flexibility and more control over their own lives, thus preserving dignity. In particular, DG ECHO will continue to encourage the use of multipurpose cash transfers, i.e. cash transfers addressing the basic needs of the beneficiaries. In order to strengthen transparency and accountability towards beneficiaries and taxpayers, DG ECHO will continue to apply, wherever the context allows, the Guidance Note on the Delivery of Large-Scale Cash Transfers. DG ECHO aims to revise the Guidance Note by end of 2020 to reflect

¹¹ At the first peak of the COVID-19 crisis in early 2020, over 1.5 billion children, roughly 90% of students worldwide, were out of school due to measures to control the spread of COVID-19 (UNESCO data)




¹² COM(2018)304 of May 2018 and the Commission Staff Working Document on Education in Emergencies in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/eie_in_humanitarian_assistance.pdf

the experience gained in its implementation and apply it as of 2021. In addition, DG ECHO will continue to actively contribute to the Donor Cash Forum created in the first half of 2019 with like-minded donors.

Other thematic policies

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, DG ECHO's **health, water, sanitation and hygiene** (WASH) assistance will remain a core sector of humanitarian aid interventions in 2021.

According to the 2020 Global Report on Food Crises, more than 135 million people across 55 countries experienced acute hunger requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic could increase the figures. In addition, high levels of acute and chronic malnutrition in children living in emergency conditions remains of concern. In 2021, the provision of **food and nutrition assistance** will continue to feature prominently in the EU's response to humanitarian crises. DG ECHO will also be involved in the preparation of the **UN Food System Summit** and of the **Nutrition for Growth Summit**. Both summits will take place in 2021.

General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world		
Specific objective 1:		Related to spending programme
The EU remains a lead humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance to populations affected by humanitarian crises		HUMA
Main outputs in 2021:		
Public consultations		
Output	Indicator	Target
 Commission presents proposal for a vision on EU Humanitarian Aid policy in the new global geopolitical and humanitarian context	Communication on EU Humanitarian Aid	Adoption in 2021
 Commission presents proposal for a vision on a strategic approach to support disarmament , demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants	Joint Communication on a strategic approach to support disarmament , demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants	Adoption in 2021
 Commission presents proposal for a vision on the rights of the child	Contribution new EU strategy on the rights of the child	Adoption in 2021
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
EU citizens are aware of EU Humanitarian Aid in general, and of specific priority themes (e.g. climate induced displacement, global COVID-19 response, etc.) in particular (<i>indicators and targets apply to all Specific</i>	- number of participating journalists in field trips on humanitarian aid - number of people reached by integrated awareness campaigns on humanitarian aid	- 30 - 15 million

<i>objectives under General objective 4)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of page views on the ECHO website - number of impressions on social media channels - number of interactions on social media channels - number of video views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.5 million (total) - 400 million (total) - 300,000 (total) - 90 million (total)
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator (2020)	Target
Number of children reached with EU Education in Emergencies assistance	1.86 million	> 1.86 million
Number of humanitarian projects per sector	Multi-purpose cash transfer- 53 Protection- 336 Food Security and Livelihood- 167 Health- 350 Education in Emergencies-129 Shelter and Settlements-73 Nutrition - 116 WASH- 178 Disaster risk reduction/ preparedness- 265 Coordination - 134 Support Operations- 88 Mine actions- 6	n/a
Number of interventions of ECHO funded humanitarian aid operations	177 million ¹³	>177

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

In today's armed conflicts, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) violations continue to be widespread and systematic causing unspeakable harm on civilian population, destroying key civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools and rendering the work of humanitarian and medical personnel even more challenging.

Systematic violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) have been consistently on the rise and constitute one of the most critical challenges for the protection of civilians, and heavily impact the EU's efforts to meet the humanitarian needs of affected populations.

IHL compliance continues to be further challenged by new realities on the ground, such as the increasing prevalence of urban warfare, the multiplicity of non-state armed actors who are not aware of - or do not feel bound by - IHL, the reluctance of certain States to ensure accountability for IHL violations, and the adoption of counter-terrorism measures that are not in line with IHL and have adverse consequences on humanitarian space.

¹³ 2019 – last available data

In 2021, Commissioner Lenarčič and DG ECHO will continue to carry out systematic public advocacy through inter alia public statements, interventions in multilateral fora, championing advocacy on specific issues such as sexual and gender-based violence, attacks against health care medical workers and facilities, or attacks on and workers and schools.

DG ECHO will also pursue its advocacy work to ensure that counter-terrorism measures and sanctions regimes comply with International Humanitarian Law. It will make sure that Council conclusions on specific crises include references as appropriate to IHL violations, and calls to warring parties to comply with obligations under IHL¹⁴.

DG ECHO will also be involved in the preparation of the **EU human rights due diligence policy** to ensure that EU security sector support, including in the context of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, is in compliance with human rights law and international humanitarian law, where applicable.

General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world		
Specific objective 2: <i>Humanitarian space is preserved and respect for International Humanitarian Law is ensured</i>		<i>Related to spending programme</i> HUMA
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator (2020)	Target
Number of EU statements, Council conclusions, including humanitarian elements	23	25

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

DG ECHO provides humanitarian relief throughout the world in a principled and needs-based manner and aims to ensure availability of funding for as many crisis situations as possible and that there is a swift, efficient and comprehensive response.

In order to ensure adequate and effective assistance, DG ECHO employs a suite of information tools ensuring fresh and thorough data and expert advice to underpin evidence-based decision-making. In 2021, DG ECHO will continue improving evidence-base funding allocation tools.

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/policy_guidelines_humanitarian_protection_en.pdf

Providing rapid and flexible assistance both in the major crises and in so-called "forgotten crises" has become a hallmark of the EU's profile as a donor. DG ECHO will continue to put particular emphasis on responding to "forgotten crises" by devoting a sizeable part of the funding to addressing needs in areas that were of difficult access, and by providing a rapid response in areas or sectors underfunded by other donors in 2021.

Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and cross-cutting issues

Given the protracted nature of the majority of humanitarian crises, there is a strong consensus among the international actors to improve and strengthen the link between humanitarian and development aid, and where relevant, peace actions.

Without compromising the humanitarian principles, DG ECHO's support will therefore aim at contributing to longer-term strategies to build the capacities and resilience of the most vulnerable and address underlying reasons for their vulnerability to all shocks and stresses.

Ensuring a thorough understanding of the implications of humanitarian actions on conflict dynamics will be part of EU's principled and pragmatic Integrated Approach, in all relevant contexts.

In 2021, DG ECHO will continue to support joined-up approaches between external instruments, EU institutions and Member States, aimed at increasing the impact of EU's external action and at sustaining progress towards EU development, humanitarian, foreign and security policy objectives. In addition, DG ECHO will support the development of the EU's new way of working as a process to shift the work culture towards more systematic and up-front coordination between the humanitarian, development and peace actors in headquarters and on the ground, in full compliance with their respective mandates and roles.

Given the numbers of forcibly displaced people and the length of crises¹⁵, DG ECHO will continue and strengthen its efforts to raise the awareness of the situation of vulnerable Internally Displaced People (IDP). The Commission Communication 'Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance', outlines a development-led approach to forced displacement. Its main objective is to strengthen the resilience and self-reliance of both the displaced and their host communities through a multi-actor approach from the outset of displacement crises. Both development and humanitarian actors will continue the implementation of the approach in an ever increasing number of countries.

Another cross-cutting issue is social protection. Scaling up social protection systems has been identified as one of the core avenues to enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations, provide more durable solutions and enable quick and efficient humanitarian assistance in response to sudden-onset disasters. While building national social protection

¹⁵ More than 80 % of displacement crises last for more than 10 years.

systems has traditionally fallen under the remit of development aid, the humanitarian community can play an important role in aligning with and complementing these efforts in supporting the creation of shock-responsive social protection systems and safety nets for the most vulnerable. Social protection is furthermore increasingly considered as an entry and exit point for cash transfers, laying the basis for more durable solutions. In 2018-19, Commission services (DGs ECHO, DEVCO and NEAR), developed a Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus (SPaN)¹⁶. In line with the Guidance, DG ECHO will continue to engage with development actors to support the development of the shock responsive social protection systems whenever feasible.

Examples of Humanitarian Crises to which DG ECHO will be responding in 2021:

COVID-19 response in external action

In response to the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Commission will keep mobilising support to respond in a coordinated manner, applying the Team Europe approach initiated in 2020. The Commission's humanitarian response will factor in the COVID-19 context, risks and related needs as far as the most vulnerable populations are concerned. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be most acutely felt by populations already affected by humanitarian crises: refugees, IDPs, people living in conflict zones and/or in areas seriously affected by climate change. Women, children, elderly and disabled people are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19. In 2021, the European Commission will follow up on the interventions launched in 2020 with the additional humanitarian funding provided then to increase the emergency response and preparedness to the pandemic in particular in countries where healthcare systems are weak and at risk of being rapidly overwhelmed in case of epidemic outbreak.

Syria

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 and Iraq). Inside Syria, where 11 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, DG ECHO will maintain its focus on multi-sectoral life-saving actions, with an emphasis on emergency response and preparedness, protection, and health interventions, 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 June 2020. Particular attention will also be paid to the promotion of IHL and notably to advocacy for unhindered humanitarian access to people in need for assistance, including through cross-border operations from neighbouring countries where deemed necessary. In Lebanon and Jordan, accounting for the two world highest refugee populations per capita, DG ECHO activities will focus on protection, basic needs assistance

¹⁶ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/102971/download?token=tqlgAy1s>

and Education in Emergencies for the most vulnerable refugees. In Lebanon this aid will now be combined with additional support following the Beirut port explosions of August 2020, targeting also the most vulnerable Lebanese. Existing linkages with development interventions will be further enhanced. In July 2020, the EU Council and the EP adopted an amending budget of EUR 585 million, which included a EUR 485 million top-up of the humanitarian support for the refugees in Turkey. The amending budget will support the continuation of two major humanitarian programmes for refugees until at least the end of 2021: the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) and the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE). These programmes support more than 1.7 million of the most vulnerable refugees in Turkey including support for the families of more than 600,000 refugee children as a direct incentive for them to go to school.

The Central African Republic (CAR)

The crisis in the Central African Republic is one of the world's most neglected, protracted crisis. Seven years of fighting resulted in a situation in which more than half of the population – some 2.8 million people – is in need of humanitarian aid¹⁷. The CAR continues to be affected by clashes between armed groups, and against the UN peacekeeping force – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The violence against civilians, targeting schools, health facilities and sites housing Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), has forced thousands to flee since 2013. A quarter of the CAR population is either internally displaced or living as refugees in neighbouring countries. The basic needs as well as the protection needs of civilians are enormous, and involve many cases of (Sexual) and Gender Based Violence ((S)GBV).

Insecurity has prevented the complete redeployment of the public administration and the restoration of order and national authority. Today the government controls less than 30% of the territory, and its capacity to respond to the crisis is very limited. At the same time, the elections scheduled for the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021 pose a risk to the already fragile security situation and could exacerbate the dire humanitarian needs.

According to the latest IPC analysis (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) of May 2020, more than 2.3 million people are food insecure (IPC Phase 3+). The situation of acute food insecurity has worsened not only because of insecurity but also as a result of the socio-economic recession caused by Coronavirus prevention and control measures. 37.7% of children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition.

More than a third of school-age children are out of school for financial reasons, exposing them to multiple dangers, including but not limited to early marriages, involuntary pregnancies, work in the fields and recruitment into armed groups.

¹⁷ According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021

CAR is the second country with the worst access to health care in the world according to the INFORM index (score: 9.6/10). The health system is very precarious with a limited number of medical facilities, lack of qualified personnel, drugs and medical equipment. The system is heavily dependent on humanitarian aid and external assistance.

Humanitarian needs are on the rise in all sectors and the perspective for 2021 is worrisome. Insecurity, insufficient respect of humanitarian principles and IHL, difficulties in access and administrative constraints challenge the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

For 2021, the initial allocation foreseen is EUR 19.5 million. The CAR crisis and its spill-over to neighbouring countries is considered a forgotten humanitarian crisis by the European Commission.

Food security crisis in Eastern Africa

Acute food insecurity needs have dramatically increased in the Greater Horn of Africa region in 2020, from the already very high levels in 2019. Following an analysis by IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development), an estimated 50.6 million people in the IGAD region (approximately 20% of the population) are at risk of being food insecure and will require food assistance if urgent action is not taken.

The COVID-19 pandemic impact on food production, supply chains and trade links, and on people's income activities, is taking its toll across a region that is already facing complex situations combining conflict, economic crisis, weather-related disasters such as droughts and floods - further intensified by climate change and environmental degradation - and a very harmful locust upsurge since December 2019.

These combined crises in the region have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and disrupted livelihoods of populations that were so far not relying on humanitarian assistance, such as populations living in urban areas and some rural populations who could rely on their own production for their subsistence.

Despite efforts in some countries to reinforce existing safety nets to respond to the food crisis, the coverage remains largely insufficient. As needs increase, current food assistance responses are insufficient and suffer from inadequate coverage and reduced rations. Refugees in particular are affected by food ration cuts as pipelines remain underfunded.

In 2021 the Commission will aim at scaling-up timely and effective food assistance to the severely food insecure people, and at creating synergies with self-reliance strategies to protect the livelihoods of households still able to cover their food needs. Such strategies could, in turn, reduce the dependency on humanitarian food assistance.

Yemen

With an alarming 24.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection, Yemen remains the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate due to the combined effect of protracted conflict, violence against civilians including gross violations of IHL, and the collapse of public institutions and

services. Over 3.6 million people are internally displaced. The already fragile healthcare system is struggling to address the excessive mortality related to COVID-19 and other epidemics, leaving 19.7 million people in need of health assistance. The conflict and its disproportionate economic consequences on civilians are driving the largest food security emergency in the world, with 20 million people classified as food insecure. With no prospects for short-term economic recovery, the food security situation is expected to further deteriorate, with an increased risk of famine as reported by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator before the UN Security Council in September 2020. In 2021, DG ECHO response will address the most urgent, life-saving needs of populations directly exposed to conflict and displacement, and to the health, nutrition and food security crises, including WASH activities to prevent transmission of epidemics and malnutrition. The response to COVID-19 will be integrated in every operation with a priority for community-based interventions. The operating environment deteriorated significantly in recent years, with increasing challenges to deliver aid in accordance with humanitarian principles, particularly in the north of Yemen. DG ECHO is playing a leading role among donors on humanitarian advocacy following a two-pronged approach based on advocacy through sustained dialogue and risk mitigation measures.

[Afghan crisis](#)

Afghanistan could be at a turning point in its history. After four decades of conflict and a ceasefire signed on 29 February 2020 between the US and the Taliban, intra-Afghan peace negotiations started on 12 September 2020 in Doha. However, peace talks will take time, and violence continues in parallel. The humanitarian crisis continues to be very severe, and is now compounded by COVID-19, both from a sanitary and socio-economic point of view. Close to half of the population (18 million people) is considered to be living in conflict areas. Some 4 million people are displaced, and up to 17 million people are expected to be severely food insecure during the 2020-2021 winter. Moreover, the very weak health system is unable to withstand the pandemic. Health facilities highly depend on external assistance. The country is also very prone to natural hazards.

The Afghan crisis continues to be one of the top generators of displacement worldwide. Neighbouring Iran and Pakistan host the largest number of refugees (4 and 3 million respectively, both registered and unregistered).

In 2021, the European Commission will continue supporting the most vulnerable populations in Afghanistan with life-saving multi-sectorial assistance, and will support Iran and Pakistan's efforts to sustain the most vulnerable Afghan refugees. Particular support will continue to be provided to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences.

[Venezuelan crisis](#)

In a context dramatically marked by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the acute political and socio-economic crisis in Venezuela, with its severe humanitarian impact inside the country and its regional destabilising effects, will remain a priority for the EU. Inside the country, independent sources identify up to 14 million people in need, of which at least 9.3

million requiring food assistance. The number of refugees and migrants has exceeded 5.2 million, making this one of the largest displacement crises worldwide. COVID-19 has overwhelmed Venezuela's extremely weak health system, and further exacerbated the already dire situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants across the region.

Since 2019 the EU has assumed a leading role by creating the International Contact Group (ICG), which has been supporting mediation efforts for a political, peaceful solution. In this framework, in 2021 DG ECHO will continue to lead the humanitarian branch of the ICG, seeking to further open the humanitarian space and guarantee the impartial delivery of aid.

DG ECHO has already substantially increased its humanitarian budget and reinforced its field office in Caracas, becoming the lead humanitarian donor in Venezuela and a major player in supporting the UNHCR/IOM led regional response and platform which coordinates assistance to Venezuelan refugees and migrants. These efforts will be pursued and where relevant scaled up in 2021. DG ECHO will continue supporting multisectoral assistance, including for local communities in receipt of refugees, with a strong focus on health assistance, protection and epidemics preparedness/response. DG ECHO will also continue to contribute actively to international coordination efforts, including any upcoming pledging events, cooperating closely with EEAS and DEVCO.

General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world

Specific objective 3:

The EU remains a global humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance in countries affected by humanitarian crises

Related to spending programme(s)

HUMA

Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator (2020)	Target
Funding per crisis (breakdown as per final budget allocations)	West Africa (89 700 000) Central Africa (117 200 000) Sudan and South Sudan (152 000 000) Horn of Africa (105 500 000) Southern Africa, Indian Ocean (64 700 000) DRC and Great Lakes Region (46 500 000) North Africa (23 000 000) Iraq (35 000 000) Arabian Peninsula (114 000 000) Middle East (312 721 000) Turkey (531 700 000) Ukraine, Western Balkans and Caucasus (27 500 000) South West Asia (130 025 616) South & East Asia and Pacific (66 510 000)	n/a

	Latin America (84 100 000)) Caribbean (23 500 000)	
Number of countries in which ECHO funded humanitarian aid operations	76	n/a

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

The UCPM will continue to be as well an instrument projecting EU solidarity within the Union and beyond its borders. Since its inception, the international dimension of the UCPM has grown in importance and today over two thirds of the UCPM requests for assistance come from third countries. The assistance provided is not only in the form of capacities, but also technical and scientific expertise, notably in the form of Advisory Missions. DG ECHO will continue to foster this type of cooperation to not only support third countries in the aftermath of a disaster, but also contributing to build more resilient disaster management structures. Based on the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, DG ECHO will work towards strengthening the current system of the UCPM, including the international cooperation aspects.

Given the geographical proximity and shared risk landscape, enlargement partners and countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy will continue to be a key priority for the work of the UCPM. Integrating further IPA countries (countries benefiting from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) into the UCPM is essential, based on the history of mutual assistance.

The lessons learnt for the COVID-19 pandemic show that the UCPM revision of 2019 was needed, but that the UCPM needs to be further reinforced to better respond to large-scale emergencies affecting most if not all EU Member States simultaneously. The gaps identified call for reinforcement of strategic autonomy in building capacities under the rescEU reserve as well as transport and logistics, which would be particularly relevant for the external aspect of UCPM. In 2021, the Commission together with Member States and Participating States will explore possibilities to implement follow-up actions identified in 2020, while ensuring that additional lessons are identified.

The UCPM relies on state-of-the-art technical and scientific knowledge and tools to provide fast advice for more efficient and effective emergency response operations, DG ECHO works closely with other Commission services and EEAS as well as with agencies such as SatCen, Frontex, or the ECDC to provide situational awareness and analysis products for emergency operations.

DG ECHO will keep strengthening the early warning and information systems for natural disasters (e.g. droughts, floods, forest fires, tropical cyclones or severe weather), namely GDACS, EFFIS, GWIS, EFAS, GLOFAS, EDO and GDO¹⁸ and will also make extensive use of the services and information provided via the Copernicus programme for emergency management, climate change, and security, as well as the interfaces between these three areas. DG ECHO will become more involved in the Copernicus programme through a co-delegation agreement with DG DEFIS and DG JRC, and will continue the operational and technical scientific cooperation with DG JRC to provide situational awareness to the ERCC as well as Member States and Participating States.

DG ECHO will also tap into European scientific expertise for natural and man-made disasters through thematic scientific partnerships for operational response. DG ECHO will keep strengthening its Geographic and Information System (GIS) capacity to keep supporting operations by means of cartographical and geospatial products. At the same time, DG ECHO will continue learning from experience through the UCPM Lessons Learnt Programme.

DG ECHO's activities are also embedded in the larger EU response to crisis, e.g. through the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements and the production of Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) reports. In this regard, DG ECHO will continue acting as 24/7 entry point for IPCR, and provide coordination support to large emergencies such as COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to its unique infrastructure, the established network of contacts, its know-how and vast experience, the ERCC effectively acts as a central hub for cross-sectoral coordination. During an emergency, the ERCC brings together relevant stakeholders, institutions and services in regular crisis coordination meetings to facilitate emergency decision-making and coordinate actions. Moreover, the new UCPM legislative proposal¹⁹ aims at furthering the ERCC's access to analytical, monitoring, and information management and communication capacities as to be able to better support operations and inform decision-making.

General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world		
Specific objective 4: <i>Adequate and effective civil protection response and preparedness is provided to people in need</i>		<i>Related to spending programme</i> UCPM
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator (2020)	Target
Coverage of requests for assistance from third countries and fulfilment	67 requests received a positive response under UCPM	All request receive a positive response

¹⁸ GDACS: Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System; EFFIS: European Forest Fire Information System; GWIS: Global Wildfire Information System; EFAS: European Flood Awareness System; GLOFAS: Global Flood Awareness System; EDO: European Drought Observatory; GDO: Global Drought Observatory.

¹⁹ COM(2020)220 final

of needs during crises Number of Requests for Assistance of third countries that receive a positive response under the UCPM		
Increased disaster preparedness in partner countries outside the EU Number of projects financed for preparedness outside the EU	4 projects financed	2 projects financed
Number of projects financed for prevention outside the EU	0	1
The UCPM (ERCC and MS/PS) receives scientific and technical advice for operations and operational preparedness	1. 4 JRC reports	4 JRC Reports
The UCPM Lessons Learnt programme provides evidence for improving and advancing in all emergency management cycle phases (prevention, preparedness and response)	1. Annual lessons learnt document 2. Follow-up activities regarding the implementation of lessons	1. One annual lessons learnt document and one presentation before the Civil Protection Committee ²⁰ 2. One follow-up overview as an annex to the annual report

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

A European Green Deal will require consolidated efforts from across Member States and the EU institutions, where the Commission's contribution will be crucial. Climate change needs to be prevented but also mitigated at home and abroad. Making sure our societies are more resilient and better able to adapt is key to responding to the challenge of climate change. DG ECHO will continue to play its part for complete and efficient delivery of the Green Deal by contributing to both its internal and external dimensions.

In 2021, DG ECHO will continue contributing to several actions of the European Green Deal, in particular to the development and implementation of the new EU Forest and Adaptation strategies by taking into account the outcomes of the latest Overview of Natural and Man-made Disasters the European Union may face as a Commission's Staff Working Document. DG ECHO will also continue to promote mainstreaming of disaster risk management in the context of the new Sustainable finance strategy.

²⁰ Chaired by the Commission, the Civil Protection Committee supports the implementation of civil protection legislation by giving opinions on implementing acts proposed by the Commission. It brings together all Member States and Participating States to the UCPM.

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

Internal Dimension

In the framework of the UCPM, DG ECHO is supporting Member States in their reporting on national disaster risk management. Furthermore, DG ECHO will continue in 2021 to promote a better understanding of risk following the publication in 2020 of the Overview of Natural and Man-made Disasters the European Union may face as a Commission's Staff Working Document.

DG ECHO continues mainstreaming disaster risk reduction across EU policies, with a special focus on mobilising long-term investments in disaster risk management from cohesion, agricultural and research policy funding and linking with the EU climate and environmental policies. It actively participates in the preparation of the 2021-2027 programming period.

External Dimension

Disaster preparedness is part of the overall objective of relief and support to the most vulnerable people suffering from conflicts and disasters across the world through the mobilisation of both humanitarian aid and European civil protection assistance. An anticipatory approach can help reduce needs and overall relief. In 2021, DG ECHO continues strengthening its approach to disaster preparedness and early action, implementing the new strategy in the domain adopted in 2020.

The Disaster Preparedness Strategy and funding ensures the mainstreaming of preparedness and climate adaptation into humanitarian action that ultimately increases the resilience to climate change of those we provide aid to. Interconnections between the impacts of conflict and climate change can be significant and should thus form part of an overall risk and vulnerability assessment. These considerations are taken into account when establishing related future funding priorities.

Addressing disaster or climate-induced displacement is crucial; according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 17.2 million people were displaced internally as a result of disasters in 2019. In addition, many more are displaced by more permanent slow-onset impacts of climate change, like sea-level rise or desertification.

DG ECHO will apply the nexus approach, including by promoting further the inclusion of a climate and prevention/preparedness aspect in development programming in the future Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation instrument (NDICI), and in particular through its rapid-response pillar.

Tracking resilience and climate action will be done through the Resilience Marker and the Climate Tracking. The Resilience Marker, which is currently being used in the description of each DG ECHO funded action, will be used to monitor progress in terms of integrating

preparedness in humanitarian actions as well as compliance with DG ECHO's requirements in terms of reducing the environmental impacts of the actions it funds.

General objective 1: A European Green Deal		
Specific objective 1: <i>People and communities at risk of disasters are resilient and prepared</i>		Related to spending programme UCPM
Main outputs in 2021:		
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
EU citizens are aware of EU Civil Protection in general, and of rescEU, ESI and the EU response to COVID-19 in particular	- number of participating journalists in field trips or virtual events on civil protection	- 10
	- number of people reached by integrated awareness campaigns on civil protection	- 10 million
	- number of page views on the ECHO website	- 1.5 million (total)
	- number of impressions on social media channels	- 400 million (total)
	- number of interactions on social media channels	- 300,000 (total)
	- number of video views	- 90 million (total)
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator (2020)	Target
A summary of risk assessments and assessment of risk management capability are made available by Member States and Participating States ²¹ to the European Commission.	27 Member States and Participating States submit the summary of risk assessment, and assessment of risk management capability.	33 Member States and Participating States submit the summary of risk assessment, and assessment of risk management capability.

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

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

The 2007 European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid already called for the integration of environmental considerations in humanitarian aid sectoral policies and interventions, even

²¹ 27 EU Member States and 6 Participating States of the UCPM.

short-term emergency ones, based on the ‘do no harm’ principle – a principle for taking into consideration the negative effects of aid.

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

In 2021, DG ECHO will continue pursuing the ambitious approach to reducing the environmental footprint of humanitarian assistance by reducing to all the extent possible the negative environmental impact of its and its partners’ operations. This will be reflected in a new logistics policy and in the new Partnership with NGOs at various levels. DG ECHO will work with its partners throughout 2021 to develop requirements in priority areas, which will start applying from the 2022 Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs). Environmental concerns will also be mainstreamed in the different thematic policies.

General objective 1: A European Green Deal		
Specific objective 2: <i>The environmental impact of humanitarian aid operations is reduced</i>		<i>Related to spending programme HUMA</i>
Main outputs in 2021:		
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator (2020)	Target
Number of humanitarian aid projects that incorporate environmental considerations	(new indicator) ²²	200

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

Whenever a natural or man-made disaster strikes, inside or outside the EU, any affected country can request assistance from the UCPM through the ERCC. In the context of the COVID-19 response, the Emergency Support Instrument was re-activated in early 2020 to offer further support to those EU Member States in need. The continued offer of assistance by EU Member States and Participating Countries is a remarkable proof of EU solidarity in action.

²² New indicator, results will only be available as of 2021

Furthermore, as part of the UCPM, DG ECHO is financing cross-border projects with the aim to strengthen prevention and preparedness in EU Member States and Participating Countries. In 2021, at least one peer review on disaster risk management in these countries will be conducted. A study on the economic benefits of disaster risk reduction and on new options for risk transfer mechanisms (including insurance) will be developed.

Moreover, the UCPM continues to support activities to enhance the level of preparedness of emergency response operations managed by DG ECHO. The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network implements well-known and successful existing activities, such as the UCPM training and lessons learnt programmes, a rich selection of exercises and the exchange of civil protection experts. It will gradually introduce new initiatives and new, digital, methodologies in its services to further support the UCPM and its Member States/Participating States. To do so, it will follow a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approach. The UCPM continues to be an important and effective tool to mobilise and coordinate assistance provided by EU Member States and Participating Countries to respond to crises.

In terms of external communication, DG ECHO will continue its efforts to facilitate journalists' visits to the field and provide them with digital information sources, to enhance media coverage of EU civil protection, and to promote the roll-out of rescEU, ESI and other prevention and preparedness initiatives under the Recovery Plan for Europe. Public awareness campaigns (including media, social media and online advertising, partnerships with civil protection stakeholder media, etc.) will ensure visibility among a broad segment of society in priority EU Member States. On a more continuous basis, DG ECHO's website and social media channels will engage with interested EU citizens, as well as with the stakeholder community, through up-to-date information, factsheets, audio-visual material and background stories.

Specific Objective 1: The needs of the most vulnerable people in times of crises are met

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, 2020 was an exceptional year for the UCPM due to the COVID-19 outbreak, with a number of activations substantially higher than usual. Compared to the average of 25 UCPM activations a year, by November 2020 the UCPM was activated 92 times. 55 activations were COVID-19-related, 27 related to the consular assistance, and 10 times to non-COVID-19 related emergencies²³. In 2021, this trend may continue if the COVID-19 pandemic is not brought under control and keeps overwhelming national capacities in the European Union and in partner countries abroad.

²³ Including: the earthquake in Croatia, migration flow in Greece and Serbia, tropical cyclone Harold in Vanuatu and Fiji, the floods in Ukraine, the explosion in Lebanon, the floods in Sudan and Niger, and the forest fires in Bolivia.

On the legislative front, DG ECHO will continue working towards the successful completion of the negotiations on the Commission proposal to enhance the UCPM presented in June 2020. Following the adoption of the Parliament Report of Rapporteur Androulakis in September and of the Council General Approach in November 2020, and the subsequent kick-off of trilogue negotiations in December 2020, DG ECHO expects to be able to reach a political agreement on the file during the Portuguese Council Presidency. Depending on the progress made and related procedures, formal adoption and entry into force will be sought still under the Portuguese Presidency or during the early stages of the Slovenian Council Presidency. Moreover, during 2021 developments on the Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) area are expected, with the adoption of an implementing act defining certain types of CBRN capacities under the rescEU framework.

The European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP) remains the UCPM key pillar for deploying capacities and will be further strengthened, with a focus on engaging with Member and Participating States so that they commit more capacities where gaps exist, and certifying already committed capacities. Definitions and goals for UCPM capacities are currently being assessed and could be revised in 2021. DG ECHO will continue to ensure that the Union has at its disposal additional rescEU capacities in the sectors that have been approved by Member States (forest fires, medical emergencies), and continue extending rescEU reserve to other capacity groups, notably in the area of Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) capacities.

When it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic, the rescEU medical stockpile will continue to be developed, building on the first two grants signed with Romania and Germany in 2020, and the launch of two additional invitations to submit grant applications that resulted in further grant agreements with Sweden, Denmark, Greece and Hungary. Following a second call for strategic stockpiling, grant agreements were subsequently signed with the following countries: Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Belgium. At the beginning of 2021, the rescEU medical stockpile will include an important number of personal protective equipment, including masks and gowns, as well as medical equipment in relevant quantities to constitute EU-level safety net aimed at combatting serious cross-border threats to health.

Concerning aerial forest firefighting capacities, the successful **rescEU transition phase** will continue to be financed in 2021, aiming at maintaining at least the same number of capacities (15 aircraft, including both airplanes and helicopters). Moreover, building on the first rescEU *proper* capacities established in 2020 for the lease of 2 aircraft (with Sweden), a grant agreement **for procurement of medium amphibious** planes is expected to be concluded with France and implemented throughout 2021. Given the amount available in 2021 for rescEU transition – and for rescEU proper – the planned actions might be revised accordingly. The discussion on joint procurement of a fleet of medium amphibious planes for forest fires under rescEU, is still pending on the adoption of amendment to the relevant legal basis.

In the area of medical emergencies, 2021 will see the continuation of the work around the preparation towards the establishment of a field hospital EMT-3 at European level. Moreover, building on the first grant for a medical evacuation capacity (MEDEVAC) for highly infectious patients signed in 2020 (Norway), a second grant for a similar capacity is expected to be concluded with Germany. Discussion will also continue for the development of the other type of MEDEVAC foreseen in the legislation (MEDAVAC for disaster victims) with those countries that have signalled a strong interest.

Finally, discussions with Member States are also on-going on the development of rescEU capacities in case of CBRN events.

DG ECHO will continue leading the Mobility Package under the ESI framework to complement the response of the UCPM to the COVID-19 outbreak. Out of the initial EUR 220 million allocated for cargo operations, EUR 70 million remain available. In 2021, DG ECHO will continue supporting Member States with innovative ideas, such as the proposal to establish an 'EU Emergency Cargo Corridor' to facilitate transport operations; from within the EU and from third countries into the EU, as well as transport of medical teams and patients. The management challenge is to ensure fast delivery to the ongoing crisis by adequately allocating human resources and properly setting up new structures. Complementarity between the UCPM and ESI is paramount.

Based on the experience with COVID-19 pandemic and in line with the joint statement of the members of the European Council on 26 March 2020 calling for a more "ambitious wide-ranging crisis management system", DG ECHO will continue supporting in 2021 the Commission-wide efforts to establish a European Emergency Management for the future.

As a first building block to a future wide-ranging crisis management system, DG ECHO will ensure that the outcome of the negotiations on its proposal to endow the UCPM with greater strategic autonomy and financial flexibility tabled in June 2020 is successfully adopted and can enter into force during the course of 2021.

The development of a European Civil Protection Knowledge Network to reinforce the preparedness component of the UCPM in close cooperation with the relevant national structures and to help build common Union disaster preparedness culture will also be paramount. The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network will bring together civil protection and disaster management actors and organisations including centres of excellence, universities and researchers, to share their knowledge in the field of disaster management. Members will be able to collaborate and access information on every stage of the disaster management cycle, learning from what works, increasing collective knowledge and supporting the UCPM.

General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life		
Specific objective 1: <i>The needs of people in times of crises are met</i>		<i>Related to spending programme(s)</i> UCPM
Main outputs in 2021:		
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
EU citizens are aware of EU Civil Protection in general, and of rescEU, ESI and the EU response to COVID-19 in particular	- number of participating journalists in field trips or virtual events on civil protection - number of people reached by integrated awareness campaigns on civil protection - number of page views on the ECHO website - number of impressions on social media channels - number of interactions on social media channels - number of video views	- 10 - 10 million - 1.5 million (total) - 400 million (total) - 300,000 (total) - 90 million (total)
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator (2020)	Target
Number of projects financed for preparedness inside the EU	19	5
Number of projects financed for prevention inside the EU	3	5
Number of committed and certified capacities included in the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP)	60	> 60
Number of Requests for Assistance of Member States that receive a positive response under the UCPM	72 out of 101 requests received a positive response ²⁴	All request receive a positive response
Level of awareness of Union citizens of the risk of their region	% of citizens aware of disaster risks in their region	higher % than indicator in 2020 ²⁵

PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year

This section covers how DG ECHO will deliver in 2021, as well as the steps that will be taken to modernise our way of working and to make the most efficient and effective use of resources.

²⁴ As of 22/12/2020

²⁵ Information not available for 2020

This section will cover six areas:

- Human resource management
- Sound financial management
- Fraud risk management
- Digital transition and information management
- Sound environmental management.
- Example(s) of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities.

In 2021, DG ECHO will follow the Commission corporate strategies but will also take action at local level.

The internal control framework²⁶ supports sound management and decision-making. It notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are taken into account and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

DG ECHO has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of the service's internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and be subject of a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

A. Human resource management

DG ECHO employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to deliver effectively on the Commission's objectives, priorities and core business. In 2021, DG ECHO shall continue to engage and motivate its staff in order to contribute to the latter.

To promote gender diversity in leadership, the Commission committed itself to achieve 50% of female representation in middle management by 2024. DG ECHO already achieved this specific target in 2020 and is confident it will maintain this figure in the coming years. DG ECHO will also continue motivating and supporting the career development of women with a potential and interest for a management role, notably by continuing to promote the Female Training Development Programme (FTDP) to enable talented and interested female staff members to further develop their management skills. In addition, DG ECHO will use part of the 2021 Learning and Development budget to allow for coaching and adequate training activities to encourage our female colleagues to apply for middle management positions. DG ECHO strongly promotes career development at all levels such as the Junior Professionals Programme and the External Management Development Opportunities for Commission Managers and will continue to do so in 2021. The 2021 L&D budget foresees

²⁶ [Communication C\(2017\)2373 – Revision of the Internal Control Framework](#)

among others coaching packages (including for male colleagues) and Service Interest Trainings.

DG ECHO has finalised the development of a Learning and Development plan for 2020 and 2021. It will constitute an integral part of the dedicated HR Strategy (see below).

DG ECHO cares about its staff and takes their feedback seriously. In 2021 The DG will hence continue to implement the Action Plan that was elaborated by 'My ECHO group' as a follow-up to the last Staff Survey 2018 both for staff at headquarters and for the ECHO's Field Offices. In order to quickly integrate newly recruited staff, DG ECHO has finalised a 'newcomer's package' with relevant information for new ECHO staff. The package is presented to all newcomers and shall be accompanied by tailored training sessions and mentoring to help new staff to integrate into DG ECHO. Due to the very particular circumstances that we are currently facing because of COVID-19, face-to-face meetings may continue to be difficult to realise (at least in the first months of 2021). To facilitate for newcomers to integrate and for current staff members to feel part of a team and to keep up their motivation, part of the 2021 L&D budget will be dedicated to virtual team events. The mentoring, and team events will be monitored by the ECHO HR Business Correspondent. In addition, DG ECHO's Director-General will continue to meet newcomers and ECHO staff for a virtual coffee on regular basis in 2021.

DG ECHO Staff and Management will continue to be informed about the main achievements and the latest state of play on various actions, through a variety of internal communication channels. Owing to COVID-19 and its impact on physical presence in the office premises, usual communication channels such as TV screens in the common spaces (e.g., cafeteria) might not be an option. Therefore, the internal communication with news articles, important information, HR communications, social corners etc. will continue to be timely and thoroughly advertised and updated on DG ECHO's Intranet. In addition, the coffee roulette initiative launched during the confinement will continue in 2021. This initiative facilitates informal social contact among colleagues including newcomers, middle and senior managers.

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 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. Although missions may severally decrease in 2021 as a consequence of COVID-19, dedicated training on security and psychological focused trainings will be continued in this context.

Moreover, the Management Charter signed by ECHO management early 2020 is a key document of reference for staff well-being whereby they commit to optimising staff well-being and ways of boosting staff engagement and respect of work-life balance. Newly recruited managers in 2021 will be asked to sign and adhere to this charter. In addition,

managers will be asked to follow dedicated management training on how to manage hybrid teams and underperformance issues in a virtual set-up. Overall, staff well-being is inevitably impacted by the increasing number and intensity of crises ECHO is dealing with in an environment of resources restrictions. Hence, ECHO continuously seeks opportunities for efficiency gains in ways of working and enhancement of organisational performance.

In order to ensure the effective management of human resources and to optimise the capacity to deliver on priorities, DG ECHO will finalise and implement in 2021 the local HR strategy with a medium to long-term outlook (3–5 years) consistent with the overall corporate HR strategy. An in-depth consultation of ECHO staff in view of the forthcoming HR Strategy was conducted in 2020 and will be continued in 2021 to ensure a complete staff engagement.

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

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Activities to encourage female representation in middle and senior management positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Female representation percentage in middle management (for first appointments - mandatory targets set until 2022¹⁾) and in senior management: Percentage of female representation in middle management (baseline on 01/12/2019 - 9 women out of 17 - 53%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least one additional female middle manager to be appointed by 2021: The 50% target of female representation in middle management set for 2022 was met in 2020
A continued follow-up of the result of the 2018 staff survey and the implementation of the action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement rate of the benchmarks on the Action Plan following the 2018 staff survey - Implementation of the Management Charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DG ECHO's aim is to implement all actions identified in the Action Plan following the 2018 staff survey (COVID-19 permitting). - At least twice a year the implementation of the management charter will be discussed in the coordination meeting with senior and middle management.

^[1] SEC(2017) 359 final

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff engagement index baseline 2018 staff survey 67% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the target will be to keep the same percentage of the baseline. .
Activities to improve the integration of newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of sessions for newcomers. - Newcomers welcome package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 2 newcomers' sessions to be organised in 2021 - Finalisation of the newcomers' package done in 2020. To be fully implemented in 2021

B. Sound financial management

The internal control system ensures an adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, while taking into account the nature of the payments concerned. In 2021, the control objective remains from previous years, i.e. to ensure that the residual error rate does not exceed the materiality target of 2%, both on an annual and a multiannual basis. The residual risk of error is expressed by the residual error rate obtained from the implementation of the audit and control strategies, after corrections are made that relate to the results from the other supervisory and control systems in place.

Due to the different financial procedures and risk profiles of DG ECHO's activities, separate control systems are in place for Humanitarian Aid actions, implemented under indirect and direct management, and for Civil Protection actions, managed mainly under direct management.

Effective controls

For Humanitarian Aid funds, the control layers for direct and indirect management are overall similar, the main difference being in the first layer of control. For direct management, the first stage of control is the ex-ante assessment of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), who apply to become partners with the Commission (DG ECHO). The new EU Humanitarian Partnership Certificate will apply from 1 January 2021. To become a partner, the candidate NGO must provide DG ECHO with an assurance – through an independent external auditor – of the adequacy of their management and control systems to receive DG ECHO grants. NGOs are subsequently assessed periodically to verify that they keep fulfilling these conditions of the framework agreement. For indirect

management, assurance is provided by the Pillar²⁷ assessment of the entities implementing DG ECHO funds under the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).

Monitoring of actions is another important layer of DG ECHO's control architecture. Whilst DG ECHO's objective is to monitor the implementation of all grants in the field, on-the-spot visits could in some cases – mainly for grants implemented under Exceptional Extreme Operational Constraints (EEOC) and under the remote management mode – not be possible due to problems of access, security or other constraints. Specific requirements apply for such exceptional cases to the partner concerned, covering the preparation, implementation and subsequent reporting stages of these grants.

All final reports are checked before final payment to verify the achievement of results and legality of transactions.

In addition, ex-post controls are carried according to the annual audit plans, which provide final assurance to the AOSD that payments done are legal and regular²⁸.

Civil Protection (CP) funds²⁹ are mainly implemented under the direct management modality, where grants for prevention and preparedness are awarded to the national civil protection authorities of Participating States. Furthermore, CP grants for the co-financing of transport operations are awarded to national authorities of EU Member States and non-EU Participating States.

Ex-ante and ex-post controls, following the approach applicable to Humanitarian Aid grants, also apply to CP grants to provide reasonable assurance that payments done are legal and regular.

The Emergency Support Instrument (ESI), activated in April 2020 for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, is implemented following the existing control mechanism procedures in place for CP grants and procurement, and adapted where necessary.

Efficient and economic controls

Other indicators used to ensure sound financial management are: the budget execution, the average time to pay, and the number of payments executed within the legal time. In 2019, the budget execution was 99.9% of commitment appropriations, 96% of contracted appropriations and 99.6% of payment appropriations. The average time to pay was 25.1 days, and 88% of payments were executed within the legal time. To maintain and improve this performance in 2021, DG ECHO will continue implementing actions, such as: providing

²⁷ The broad areas covered by the assessments are called pillars and include (1) internal control, (2) accounting, (3) independent external audit, (4) procedures and rules for grants, procurement or for financial instruments, (5) requirements on publication of information on recipients, (6) protection of personal data and (7) exclusion from access to funding.

²⁸ For indirect management, they are done in conformity with the Commission wide accepted notional approach.

²⁹ Grouped into three categories: Prevention, Preparedness, and Response

monthly reports on budget implementation to management; promoting awareness among staff; reviewing the allocation of responsibilities; and improving the workflow within the DG.

The cost-effectiveness of DG ECHO's controls are calculated by comparing 1) the total cost of controls, consisting of a) the total costs of staff, whose time is – partly or entirely – dedicated to quality assurance, control and monitoring activities, and b) the costs of external auditors, to 2) the ineligible items detected and corrected through ex-ante and ex-post audits. This comparison shows the quantifiable benefits of the control strategy, to which non-quantifiable benefits should be added, such as those stemming from audits recommendations to DG ECHO partners to strengthen their control systems.

Objective: The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions	Risk at payment	remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at closure	remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Value of the grants audited in the year N / Total amount paid in the year N-1	remains ≥ 15% ³⁰ of total payments made in the year N-1
Efficient controls	Budget execution (commitments and payment appropriations)	remains > 95% of payment appropriations
	Time-to-pay within the legal time	remains ≥ 90% of payments (in value) on time
Economical controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	remains 0.35% of funds managed

C. Fraud risk management

DG ECHO has an Anti-Fraud Strategy (AFS) in place since 2013, which builds on a zero-tolerance to fraud, and commits to effectively prevent, detect and correct fraud. The AFS includes an Action Plan with actions on raising fraud awareness, developing cooperation with partners and other donors, and increasing efficiency and effectiveness of internal anti-fraud activities.

³⁰ Due to the method of calculation, the actual audit coverage will normally vary between 12-18% for different years, depending on the payment schedule of funded grants, the specific timing of audits, etc. Thus, this target provides mainly a reference point and a medium-term average.

In April 2019, the Commission revised its anti-fraud strategy (CAFS 2019), including providing an Action Plan aiming at – among other things – further developing the specific anti-fraud strategies of the Commission’s DGs. In 2020, this Action Plan was reviewed, taking account of the increased fraud risk related to COVID-19.

In 2020, in line with the OLAF methodology, DG ECHO has updated its Anti-Fraud Strategy and provided an Action Plan for 2021-2024, paying particular attention to ensuring clear links between anti-fraud objectives on the one hand, and indicators, fraud risks, and mitigating measures on the other. Furthermore, the allocation of responsibilities in DG ECHO and the setting of timelines were further elaborated. In the next step, the updated AFS will undergo peer reviews by the Commission FPD Network (i.e. by the External Action FPD Network subgroup). The DG ECHO-internal anti-fraud procedures will also be reviewed in light of the updated AFS.

As in previous years, DG ECHO will continue in 2021 to have a strong focus on prevention, by raising awareness of DG ECHO staff and partners through training sessions and internal seminars, as well as by participating in partner events. Furthermore, work will focus on improved reporting and a timely and complete exchange of information with its partners on fraud-related issues. As regards prevention and detection, DG ECHO will continue in 2021 to implement the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy Action Plan, e.g. with reference to Action 29 (Evaluate fraud risks and vulnerabilities with regard to spending in emergency situations).

DG ECHO will continue cooperating closely with OLAF on anti-fraud trainings of DG ECHO HQ and field staff; on the exchange of relevant information relating to fraud suspicion; on early involvement of OLAF in the drafting of legal acts to ensure a fraud-proof legal framework; and on developing the reporting of fraud allegations. This includes further encouraging partners and whistle-blowers to report fraud by, e.g., putting improved facilitating tools in place – a topic to be discussed in the External Action FPD Network subgroup.

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS)³¹ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction³² of fraud

Main outputs in 2021³³:

Output	Indicator	Target
Existing and new internal policy documents appropriately integrate antifraud measures (based on AFS 2021-2024)	Appropriate integration of anti-fraud measures in DG ECHO policies	>1

³¹ Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019 – 'the CAFS Communication' – and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 – 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

³² Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

³³ Subject to limitations imposed by COVID-19

Participation in/organisation of events aimed to exchange on transparency and fraud-related issues with other humanitarian donors	Number of events	>1
Organisation of training sessions and workshops for staff to gain insight on DG ECHO's control architecture and procedures	Rate of staff attendance	>50%
Organisation of workshops for partners to promote reporting of fraud allegations	Rate of partner attendance	>50%

D. Digital transformation and information management

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 expanded to cover the various “business” areas of both humanitarian and civil protection.

DG ECHO will continue to develop a Security Awareness Information Dashboard (SecAID). The SecAID is envisaged as a service for DG ECHO combining data, information and analysis on conflict, security, safety and related contextual elements such as natural or man-made disasters. SecAID will provide DG ECHO the capacity to establish instantly an increased level of security situational awareness at any given time, place or situation.

On the way forward to digitalisation, DG ECHO will develop a new IT tool aiming at managing the Mission Security Clearances to High Risk Countries and Areas (HRC) in order to better support HQ and Field colleagues to prepare and perform their field missions, as well as allowing a better monitoring of the missions to HRC. In addition a SecReT dashboard (security recommendations tool) is under development to detect and monitor the security recommendations in ECHO Field Offices worldwide. The dashboard will be accessible for the geographical units and the Field network unit of DG ECHO as well as by the Commission Security Service dealing with security inspections.

SecAID will hence support emergency preparedness and response operations managed by DG ECHO by providing rapid security situational awareness and analysis in relation to the current situation in a specific context or location, as well as on-demand analysis about future potential developments.

In 2021, DG ECHO will further develop its data warehouse and associated reporting tools, following a requirements' elicitation process conducted in 2019-2020. The elicitation indicated a common need to combine data from various sources, ensure their availability and quality, enable their compilation / aggregation at different levels, and use them for evidence-based policymaking. This is fully in line with the 2016 Communication on Data,

Information and Knowledge management at the Commission, which aims to maximise the use of data for better policy-making.

More specifically, a new dashboard is being prepared in 2021, following a phased approach, for supporting the funding allocation methodology of humanitarian aid. The dashboard will collect and combine data coming from various internal and external sources, presenting information per country or crisis, and supporting the evidence-based decision making. DG ECHO will continue its collaboration with the DGs of External Relations family and share real time information in a structured format allowing, among other, the automation of the OECD reporting. It mainly consists in adaptations to the new structure of information introduced by the new MFF or in addressing new OECD requirements. Additionally, the EU AID Explorer portal, which provides 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 2021, DG ECHO will continue working closely with EU Member States on the European Emergency Disaster Response Information System (EDRIS) project to enable using IATI published data to feed EDRIS and avoid double encoding. DG ECHO will also continue collaborating with UN OCHA on this topic to maximise efficiency in sharing experiences and ways of addressing the publication issues. The ultimate objective is to achieve the IATI goal of "publish data once, use it often".

On document management, DG ECHO promotes the on-line administration internally and externally. In recent years, several internal processes were automated and paperless policy was strengthened. An important milestone will materialise in 2021, with the introduction of electronic signatures, in line with the efforts at Commission level to generalize the use of *Qualified Electronic Signatures (QES)*. These are electronic signatures that provide all the necessary security, technical and legal guarantees and thus have the same legal value as blue ink signatures. This is also in line with the aim of reinforcing the use of electronic workflows and further reducing the use of paper-based workflows. DG ECHO is fully committed to the introduction of electronic signatures and has therefore requested DG DIGIT to be part of the first batch of users to whom this feature will be made available in 2021.

As far as collaborative working is concerned, DG ECHO is exploiting the possibilities offered by the Microsoft 365 pilot in order to harmonise as much as possible its ECHOField ICT architecture to the Commission ICT architecture, with a view to facilitating the online collaboration with its field offices spread around the world. For enabling the collaborative work between HQ, field, EEAS and other stakeholders, in a secured and standardised manner, DG ECHO will take advantage of the Microsoft Teams functionalities and of the wide usage of this tool within the Commission.

Under the Internal Data Protection Regulation (IDPR), entered into force in December 2018, DG ECHO has the legal obligation to integrate the principles of data protection into all aspects of our procedures and business activities. DG ECHO will be working on the

implementation of the EC's Data Protection Action Plan (C(2018)7432- final under revision) and will continue by 2024 to build up its requirements.

DG ECHO will increase its efforts in order to meet the Data Protection targets set in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024. In particular, DG ECHO Data Protection's Team will continue delivering tailored trainings and organising awareness-raising activities among its staff. These activities will be particularly focused on how to comply with data protection obligations in the most common processing operations and how to handle data breaches.

As follow-up of the implementing activities carried so far, DG ECHO will continue adapting its Privacy Statements to the related decentralised corporate records for common processing operations within the Commission's services as well as mapping those data processing activities which are not yet covered and require the submission of a specific record in the Data Protection Management System.

DG ECHO will be closely following the latest legal and procedural developments and consequently reflect them in its Intranet, which will be further and duly updated.

Following the European Court of Justice's judgement in the Schrems II case C-311/18 invalidating the Privacy Shield, DG ECHO will in line with corporate approach keep monitoring and following up the results of the mapping exercises involving international transfers of data.

DG ECHO's external website is currently in transition to Drupal 8 to be aligned to the look and feel of the Commission Information website. As a result, ECHO's website will be more coherent in terms of thematic structure, clear navigation, common layout and a cost-effective approach (standardised functionalities, components, and IT solutions). Considering that more than 40% of the ECHO external website traffic comes from smartphones, the new website will better respond to their needs, giving a more user-friendly, responsive portal with a better experience on mobile devices and tablets.

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

Main outputs in 2021:

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 and front-end)	Produce new reports, update data universes accordingly
Staff has access to streamlined data per country or crisis	Progressive enrichment of the reporting infrastructure originating from various sources including external ones	New dashboard to assist the funding allocation process(country dashboard, crisis dashboard)
Staff is aware of the	Information sessions, support and	Periodic awareness sessions and hand-

existing reporting capabilities	trainings are provided	on training to the different target audiences
Staff at HQ and in the Field Offices collaborate online	Exploit the Microsoft 365 pilot possibilities in particular the communication and collaboration functionalities	Staff both in Brussels and the field is collaborating using Teams and SharePoint
EU Member States can import their IATI files in EDRIS and avoid double encoding	Release the IATI import functionality for the end of the year; Publish guidelines on minimum content and value lists to be used for using the service.	by end 2021: At least 4 Member States using the functionality; Guidelines available;
Staff at HQ can easily file and register documents in ARES without leaving HOPE/APPEL	Number of major processes automated	70% of processes not necessitating a blue ink signature
Staff at HQ and Field levels is aware of the security context, especially in High Risk Countries and Areas	Further development of the Security Awareness Information Dashboard (SecAID) and initiate development of a new Mission Security Clearance Tool (MSCT)	SecAID dashboard gives security trends on Countries and Areas where ECHO is operating and performing field missions, based on objective information coming from different sources MSCT is a digital platform that allows a dynamic management of a mission to a high risk country, and facilitates the preparation, the performance and the monitoring of the mission, both for ECHO colleagues on mission and ECHO Security Sector Business case and project charter validated
Improve data protection awareness amongst DG ECHO staff	Percentage of staff attending awareness raising activities on data protection compliance	By end of 2021: 100% of data protection's team members; 25% of staff; 35% of senior and middle management
Updated ECHO Intranet's pages on Data Protection	Legal and procedural developments from Data Protection Officer uploaded to ECHO intranet	31.12.2021

E. Sound environmental management

The Communication on the European Green Deal stipulates that the Commission, as an institution and employer, aims to be climate neutral by 2030. DG ECHO will actively contribute to the achievement towards this target during 2021 by complying with EMAS requirements but also going above by measuring the carbon emission from missions, prioritising virtual meetings and conferences, making compliance with the EMAS guide for more sustainable meetings mandatory. The “greening” of the DG ECHO field network will also continue as part of DG ECHO’s commitment to sound environmental management.

Beyond that, DG ECHO tracks resilience and climate action. This is done via two different tools: the Resilience Marker and the Climate Tracking. The Resilience Marker, currently included in the ECHO Project Proposal Single Form, has been revised to better reflect preparedness in humanitarian actions as well as measuring the environmental dimension of DG ECHO-funded humanitarian actions. A broad climate tracking system at commitment-level has been introduced, which will help DG ECHO better demonstrate its contribution to climate action. In the future, this can be refined to track climate action across all projects with new and/or revised project indicators. This tracking system is valid for both civil protection and humanitarian assistance projects.

DG ECHO is committed to reducing the environmental footprint of its humanitarian operations, and that of our partners. This directly responds to the 'do no harm' principle. In 2020, DG ECHO adopted an ambitious approach to reducing its environmental footprint and that of its partners. DG will continue its implementation throughout 2021. DG ECHO is equally considering what aspects of civil protection assistance can have a reduced environmental footprint, going beyond the new logistics policy currently being drafted.

Objective: DG ECHO takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work

Main results and outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Reduce paper use by developing paperless working methods.	By inciting staff to print less, bring their laptop in meetings, etc. In the future, promote training to staff on the use of SharePoint	End 2021
Participate in EMAS actions and campaigns, e.g. EU Mobility Week and VeloMai (in October this year due to Covid-19 crisis)	By promoting the sustainable mobility/cycling courses offered by OIB Mobility, via EU Learn and EMAS campaigns. Also by sharing good practices on ECHO INTRANET page to sensibilise colleagues to promote a better environment (less waste etc.)	End 2021

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

In order to test novel ways of delivering humanitarian aid - and in line with its World Humanitarian Summit/Grand Bargain commitments - DG ECHO will continue drawing the lessons from the four pilot Programmatic Partnerships with international NGOs launched in 2020. The main features of the new approach are more strategic support to shared objectives, notably to ensure that a maximum of aid goes directly to beneficiaries. This includes the rollout of multi-year and multi-country programmes, simplified reporting accompanied by more transparency and trust on both sides, joint monitoring and enhanced

dialogue at both field and headquarters level. DG ECHO will continue to encourage consortia of partners to foster joint up approaches, synergies and, hence, efficiency gains. A similar approach is envisaged in 2021 with UN agencies and International Organisations that are DG ECHO strategic partners, also with a view to increasing EU visibility and leverage on their strategic, policy and operational priority-setting.

Also in line with our Grand Bargain Commitments of greater transparency, more support and funding tools to local and national responders, reduced earmarking, harmonized and simplified reporting requirements, DG ECHO contributed to the Country based Pool Funds (CBPF) of Ukraine and South Sudan on a 'pilot basis' in order to explore new ways of financing. In 2021, a 'lessons learnt' exercise will be organised to provide evidence of successes and shortcomings of these pilot exercises.