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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

**Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - (ECHO)
Annual Report 2007**

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Annex:

Detailed country by country overview of humanitarian operations, relations with partners, results of evaluations and financial tables.

1. INTRODUCTION

DG ECHO is the service of the European Commission responsible for providing **humanitarian assistance to the people affected by conflicts or disasters, both natural and man-made**, in third countries. This general objective contributes to the strategic objective of the Commission "Europe as a world partner" included in the general objective of External relations¹, set out by the European Union (EU) Treaty. The mandate of DG ECHO is to save and preserve life, reduce or prevent suffering and safeguard the integrity and dignity of **populations affected by humanitarian crises** as described in Council Regulation N° 1257/96.

In 2007, through its humanitarian aid budget, the EU provided humanitarian assistance to an estimated 127 million beneficiaries in third countries². In addition, 19.5 million people benefited from actions in respect of disaster preparedness and improved response capacity to potential risks.

With these figures, the European Union continues to be the **largest single donor** of humanitarian assistance in the world.

DG ECHO supports humanitarian aid operations in line with internationally agreed **humanitarian principles** in a **neutral, impartial and non-discriminatory** manner, in respect of International Humanitarian Law ("IHL"³) and defends the humanitarian space and principles which are increasingly under threat. For DG ECHO, the best way to preserve this humanitarian space is to maintain a high level of engagement in the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD⁴) principles, to remain committed to high quality assistance and to maintain a transparent dialogue with **other key players**.

The decisions and actions taken by the service are solely determined by the assessment of humanitarian needs and are not guided by or subject to political considerations other than the affirmation of the European Union's **solidarity** with people in need. The aid is intended to go directly to those in distress, irrespective of race, religion or political convictions

DG ECHO does not implement assistance programmes itself. It is a donor who implements its mission by funding Community humanitarian actions through **partners** who have signed either the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) such as European NGOs and International Organisations (Red Cross family) or the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) for the UN agencies (in 2007, mainly UNICEF⁵, UNHCR⁶ and WFP⁷).

¹ New Article 10c – para.2 of the EU Treaty

² Out of this figure, DG ECHO assisted 12 million refugees and a stable amount of 25 million displaced persons (in their own country) in more than 50 countries – www.internal-displacement.org (IDMC, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global overview of Trends and Developments in 2006).

³ http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/section_ihl_in_brief?OpenDocument

⁴ <http://www.goodhumanitariandonorship.org/>

⁵ United Nations Children's Fund

⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

⁷ United Nations World Food Programme

DG ECHO's task is to ensure that goods and services get to crisis zones fast through these partners. The rapidity of aid delivery is facilitated by special provisions in the Financial Regulation and their implementing measures. These structural arrangements also enable DG ECHO to deploy technical assistants (ECHO experts) in the field thereby ensuring the identification of vulnerable sections of society, an accurate assessment of needs, the rapid identification of suitable partners and projects to meet such needs. This is then followed up by on-the-spot monitoring of partners' and projects' progress in order to ensure a sound financial management in support of the declaration of assurance that resources have been used for their intended purpose.

DG ECHO's assistance also aims at facilitating, together with other aid instruments, the return of populations to self-sufficiency wherever and whenever possible, and to permit the phasing out of DG ECHO funding in good conditions. In that perspective, DG ECHO is actively engaged in implementing a **linkage strategy between relief, rehabilitation and development** "LRRD" and in developing stronger cooperation with other Commission services or donors.

Based on its experience in responding to disasters, DG ECHO also works at **promoting disaster preparedness** in order to reduce both vulnerability and exposure of people to risks and disasters as well as to reduce the economic costs of such disasters. With a view to the effective discharge of its mandate, DG ECHO may support – where appropriate and necessary – **capacity building** measures of its implementing partners.

This report sums up DG ECHO's main activities in 2007. The annex provides an extensive overview of the operations funded in the various countries and regions where DG ECHO provides assistance through its partners and statistics extracted from the 2007 financial report⁸.

The current report is being issued in order to comply with the requirement of art. 19 of the Humanitarian Aid regulation:

"At the close of each financial year, the Commission shall submit an annual report to the European Parliament and to the Council with a summary of operations financed in the course of that year. The summary shall contain information concerning the agencies with which humanitarian operations have been implemented. The report shall also include a review of any outside assessment exercises which may have been conducted on specific operations".

2. GENERAL POLICY ASPECTS

In general, over the last few decades, the magnitude, **strength and number of natural disasters have increased**. The number of people affected has also increased and the poorest people have been affected disproportionately. According to forecasts, this tendency is likely to further increase in the future.

In parallel, the number of **conflicts** has not changed significantly but tend to **last longer** and are increasingly destructive, despite the number of refugees falling in recent years.

⁸ Available at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding/key_figures/echo_en.htm

The international context in which humanitarian aid takes place has changed considerably and new actors have appeared on the scene. In this context, the three Institutions (European Parliament, Council and Commission) have signed a **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid**⁹ in December 2007 recognising the increasingly challenging environment for humanitarian response and driving forward a more efficient and coordinated EU approach. This Consensus will be followed up in 2008 by an Action Plan representing the **concrete and operational translation of the numerous political commitments contained in the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid**.

In order to improve the Commission's **response to disasters** and within the framework of the EU strategy to strengthen its response to disasters and to crises in third countries¹⁰, DG ECHO has continued to increase the number of experts in the field, in order to ensure the rapid evaluation of needs and its rapid response in the event of a disaster. The strengthening of DG ECHO's operational and contractual procedures applicable to its implementing partners (European NGOs, UN agencies and International Organisations) as well as its increased field capacity¹¹ improved the response time for delivering humanitarian aid. These improvements to the service provide a significant contribution to the development of the EU's capacity for dealing with crises and disasters, which is increasingly becoming a political priority as shown by the post-tsunami communications, the Barnier Report¹² and the relevant Presidency conclusions of the Brussels European Council of December 2007.

The principle of "*one instrument per policy area*" established by the Commission's communication¹³ to improve the efficiency of Community action, together with the Commission's communication on the financial perspectives 2007-2013, transferred the responsibility for the management of **humanitarian food aid** from DG AIDCO to DG ECHO with effect from 1 January 2007. DG ECHO has focused the food aid budget, within the framework of its mandate, to save and preserve life during emergencies and their immediate aftermath and with the same principle of needs assessment which is applied to all its interventions.

Due to the integration of food aid and aid to uprooted people within DG ECHO, the initial humanitarian aid budget made available for the year 2007 rose to € 722 million with a predicted annual indicative increase of 3% (2% inflation and 1% net increase).

⁹ Based on the Communication "*Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*" adopted on 13/6/07 (COM(2007)317 final)

¹⁰ COM(2005)153

¹¹ The amount of experts increased from 83 to 96 between 2005 and 2007

¹² For a European civil protection force: Europe aid

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/rapport_barnier_en.pdf

COM(2004)101

3. GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF DG ECHO'S HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS IN 2007

3.1. Generalities

In contrast with previous years, 2007 has seen **no major new crises** in the field of humanitarian aid, whether it be natural disasters or complex emergencies. Nevertheless, natural disasters, accentuated by climate changes, continue to increase both in frequency and severity, affecting already vulnerable people more often and more severely. Since 1975, the number of natural disasters has increased from around 75 to more than 400¹⁴ a year. In particular, the average number of hydro-meteorological disasters reported was 195 for the period 1987-1998 and this increased by 187% to an average of 365 for the period 2000-2006¹⁵.

In 2007 **natural disasters** caused serious damage: medium scale earthquakes in Peru and in the Solomon Islands; floods in Africa, India, Indonesia, North Korea, Vietnam and Latin America; cyclones in Nicaragua (Felix), Mozambique (Favio) and Bangladesh (Sidr); Hurricane Dean in the Caribbean; tropical storm in Haiti and Dominican Republic (Noel) and droughts in Moldova, Paraguay, Kenya, Somalia and the Sahel region. DG ECHO had to react speedily to help thousands of suffering people, some of whom were already affected by other crises.

Despite the continuation of many complex emergencies and the damage caused by the above-mentioned natural disasters, the absence of major large-scale crises resulted in DG ECHO remaining within the funds made available by the Budget Authority, together with additions from EDF resources and re-committed funds. Therefore, in contrast to previous years, DG ECHO did not have to draw on the Commission's Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR).

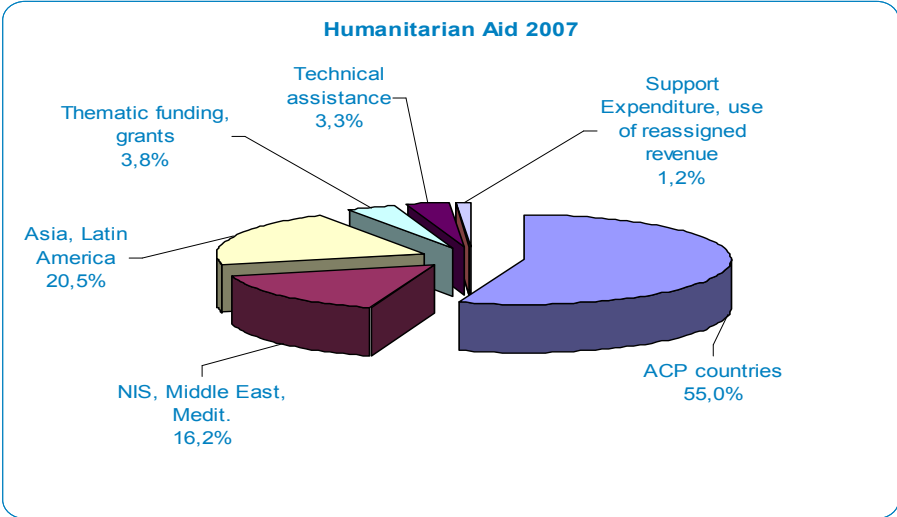
DG ECHO's response to humanitarian crises in 2007 was channelled through 85 funding decisions. The implementation of the commitment appropriations was 100%. ACP countries were the biggest recipients of aid (EUR 422.7 million (i.e. 55% of its total final budget), followed by Asia and Latin America (EUR 157.4 million – 20.5%) and Eastern Europe, New Independent States, Middle East and Mediterranean countries (EUR 124.9 million - 16.2%).

¹⁴ Source: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters(CRED), 2006 disasters in numbers <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2007/2006-Disaster-in-number-CRED-ISDR.pdf>

¹⁵ Source: id. Annual Disaster Statistical Review, Numbers and Trends, 2006 <http://www.em-dat.net/documents/Annual%20Disaster%20Statistical%20Review%202006.pdf>

The application of needs-based principles led to the following **geographical breakdown**¹⁶ of the funds committed for humanitarian aid in 2007. It should be noted that the 2006 figures do not include food aid since it was still managed by DG AIDCO in that year (in '000):

Humanitarian assistance in 2007 (including Food aid)			Compared to 2006	
Unit/Region	Total	%	Total	%
A/1: Africa, Caribbean, Pacific	422.760	55.0%	322.060	48.0%
<i>All Africa</i>	2.000			
<i>Horn of Africa</i>	217.950		161.050	
<i>Great Lakes</i>	89.500		84.050	
<i>West Africa</i>	46.600		56.150	
<i>Caribbean, Pacific</i>	16.310		1.610	
<i>Southern Africa, Indian Ocean</i>	50.400		19.200	
A/2: New Independent States, Middle East, Mediterranean	124.897	16.2%	177.900	26.5%
<i>NIS (Chechnya, Caucasus, Tajikistan ...)</i>	25.807		33.000	
<i>Middle East, Mediterranean</i>	99.090		144.900	
A/3: Asia & Latin America	157.366	20.5%	124.540	18.6%
<i>Asia</i>	117.301		99.940	
<i>Latin America</i>	40.065		24.600	
Non-geographic instruments				
– Thematic funding + grants	28.900	3.8%	20.500	3.1%
– Technical Assistance (experts & field offices)	25.400	3.3%	19.000	2.8%
– Use of re-assigned revenue	307		817	
– Support Exp. (audits, evaluation, information, etc.)	8.900	1.2%	6.189	1.0%
TOTAL	768.530	100%	671.006	100%



¹⁶ Breakdown by budget line, including EDF, of the total committed in 2007 is available in part VI

DG ECHO delivers financial assistance to the victims of conflicts or natural disasters in third countries, on the basis of **humanitarian needs assessment**. The methodology¹⁷ applied ranks third countries according to their overall vulnerability (= vulnerability index¹⁸ and as to whether they are undergoing a humanitarian crisis (= crisis index¹⁹). As a result of this exercise, 50 countries/territories have been identified as undergoing a crisis, 23 of these were identified as the most vulnerable, and 18 were in sub-Saharan Africa. These results are then matched with the evaluation undertaken in the field by DG ECHO's experts and geographical units of DG ECHO in order to define the strategy for the countries/regions concerned.

In conformity with the methodology used, DG ECHO committed in 2007 **94.6%** of its initial planned budget on the main line for humanitarian aid (23.02.01) in priority areas of **high humanitarian needs**.

In order to programme its action in favour of the populations in greatest humanitarian need, DG ECHO's aid strategy continued to focus on **forgotten crises** (situations where major humanitarian needs receive little attention on the part of donors - reflected by the low level of aid received - and the media). DG ECHO's analysis and methodology for identifying forgotten crises is based on both quantitative data (lack of media coverage or low donor support combined with high needs) and qualitative factors (field assessment by DG ECHO experts and desk officers).

The forgotten crises identified in 2007 were: Sahrawi refugees in Algeria, Chechnya and the neighbouring republics affected, population of India affected by unrest in Jammu and Kashmir, the persisting crisis of Bhutanese refugees as well as the Maoist insurrection in Nepal, population affected by the conflict in Burma/Myanmar both within the country itself as well as in neighbouring countries and the population affected by the crisis in Colombia as well as in neighbouring countries. Apart from Colombia, these crises were already identified as "forgotten crises" in 2006.

In 2007, financial support of € 60.7 million was allocated to these crises, which represents 13% of the initial operational budget²⁰.

The results of Global Needs and Forgotten Crises assessments can be found on the Europa website http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/strategy_en.htm

3.2. Main interventions in 2007 by region and allocation of funds

In terms of crises, no new complex crisis emerged in 2007 but the Commission had to deal with worsening humanitarian situations, sometimes protracted, complex emergencies already existing in previous years. Some examples are **Sudan**, where the situation remains very worrying: violence and extortion towards the civilian population continues and have again forced many to flee elsewhere in the country or to take refuge in neighbouring countries.

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/strategy_en.htm

¹⁸ The vulnerability index seeks to measure the national capacity to absorb and reduce the effects of a crisis. It is made up of different measurements, going from the Human Development Index (HDI) to the mortality rate of children under 5. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/strategy/strategy_2008_en.pdf

¹⁹ The crisis index evaluates the nearness in time of a severe incident – a war or a natural disaster – or the weighting of a population of refugees or internally displaced on the total population of the country in question.

²⁰ Humanitarian aid budget line

Floods affecting the North of Sudan, including Darfur, in July 2007 have compounded the situation.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the fighting and tensions in the East of the country restarted during the summer of 2007, particularly in the North and the Southern part of Kivu, causing numerous population movements and new humanitarian needs. **Somalia** also had to face both natural disasters (droughts) and violence, forcing many to leave their homes.

The interventions listed in the following sections are detailed in annex – section I.

3.2.1. Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP countries)

In 2007, DG ECHO allocated a total of € 422 million (i.e. 55% of its total final budget) to **ACP countries**, with the largest funding for Sudan with a total of € 110.45 million, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (€ 50 million). The other major interventions in Africa which required more than € 20 million of funding were Chad (€ 30.5 million), Zimbabwe (€ 30.2 million), Sahel (€ 25.5 million), Uganda (€ 24 million) and Ethiopia (€ 20 million).

3.2.2. Middle East and NIS

In the **Middle East**, the humanitarian situation further deteriorated in 2007. DG ECHO pursued its response by providing more than € 88 million of aid which covered the needs of the most vulnerable populations of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. This amount was also used to respond to the internal crisis in Iraq, including refugees in neighbouring countries.

In the **Northern Caucasus**, the Commission continued its funding to the victims of the Chechnya conflict in approving a total amount of € 20.8 million.

3.2.3. Asia

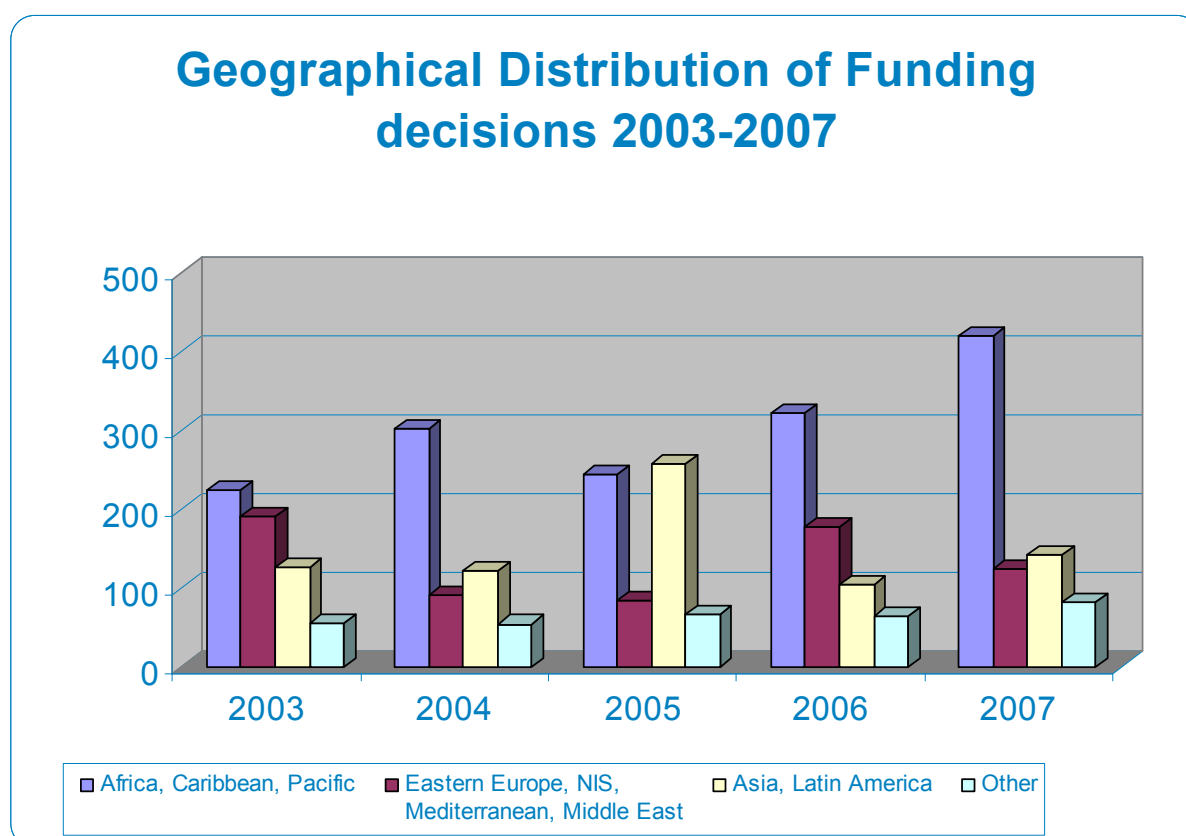
In **Asian countries** € 27 million targeted vulnerable people affected by the Afghan crisis and natural disasters in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan and € 19 million were allocated to help vulnerable populations in Myanmar and Burmese refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border as well as € 19.5 million to South Asian countries, without taking into account disaster preparedness funding, for the recovery of communities affected by floods.

3.2.4. Latin America

Finally, in **Latin America**, funding continued to provide assistance to the victims of the conflict in Colombia (€ 12 million). However, a series of natural disasters affected both South and Central America (earthquake in Peru, hurricane in Nicaragua, floods in Bolivia and Colombia, cold wave in Peru and drought and wildfires in Paraguay) and required un-programmed ECHO intervention totalling € 19 million.

3.3. Comparative analysis

In the chart below, the **comparative analysis of the geographical distribution of funding decisions for the years 2003-2007** shows that the relative share of the funding to ACP countries is continuously increasing, apart from 2005, when this trend was reversed, leaving the lion's share of funding for Asia for the two main crises in that part of the world: the tsunami and the earthquake in Kashmir. If one looks at a five-year perspective, it should also be pointed out that the funding for the various regions and areas of the world is very variable, which confirms that DG ECHO intervention is by nature and definition short-term oriented. It should also be noted that over 96% of the humanitarian aid budget is for funding humanitarian operations, whereas less than 4% is for support and administrative expenditure (information, audits, evaluations, support staff, etc.). See annex, section VI.



3.4. Thematic funding

Given the central role played by the main international organisations with a humanitarian mandate (United Nations agencies, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), etc) in the effective delivery of humanitarian aid, DG ECHO continued in 2007 to support the reinforcement of their institutional capacities through thematic funding programmes.

In 2007, DG ECHO supported UN agencies and Red Cross movement organisations as lead agencies for a total amount of € 27.5 million.

Emphasis has been put on the following gaps which are targeted to create an effective response capacity: assessing sector capacity, strengthening surge capacity, capacity building,

increase of the availability of relief items at the onset of new emergencies, development of standard operating procedures, applying benchmarks to measure performance and improving coordination and support for the UN led cluster approach to address the above issues.

3.5. Disaster preparedness activities

In line with Council Regulation 1257/96, DG ECHO promotes - alongside its humanitarian relief - disaster preparedness through coordination, advocacy and the specific DIPECHO programme. The consequences of disasters as well as the more open recognition of global climate change and its impact show that this commitment is both relevant and appropriate.

On a strategic level, DG ECHO pursued its reinforcement of institutional resources on disaster preparedness which is expected to facilitate a more coherent and comprehensive approach to mainstreaming disaster preparedness in humanitarian relief and rehabilitation programmes. This is fully in line with the global attention to disaster risk reduction activities among humanitarian and development donors and the planned follow-up to the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015*.

In 2007, DG ECHO continued its engagement in advocacy activities aimed at ensuring that development donors include disaster risk-reduction components in their work in regions at risk of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones, etc, and to support practical measures to reduce these risks. DG ECHO is also a strong advocate for community-based approaches to disaster risk-reduction which increase the coping capacity of vulnerable communities.

Due to significant weaknesses in the national response capacity and the capability of local communities to cope with the consequences of a disaster, developing countries are especially at risk from such risks. DIPECHO projects are community-based disaster preparedness projects which focus on communities which are most exposed to natural disasters and have low coping capacity. The projects have a demonstrative and replicable purpose with a view to being integrated into long-term development and national strategies. As well as country-based operations, DIPECHO Action Plans contain regional projects. The rationale behind this is simple: natural disasters are not confined to state boundaries. In 2007, DG ECHO committed a total of EUR 19.5 million for DIPECHO Action Plans in Central America, Latin America, South Asia and the Caribbean.

Moreover, DG ECHO mainstreams, when possible and appropriate, disaster-preparedness components in its humanitarian response to natural disasters. In 2007, this was the case in 18 funding decisions launched in response to natural disasters in 17 countries (Solomon Islands, Haiti, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Belize, Dominica, Santa Lucia, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Columbia) with related contracts amounting to approximately € 2.135 million. In addition, DG ECHO allocated € 4 million to strengthen IFRC capacities to respond to natural disasters in selected high risk regions.

At international level, DG ECHO collaborates with the main actors in the field of development cooperation. The aim is to better integrate disaster risk reduction into development activities and ensure a stronger linkage with efforts done relating to climate changes adaptation in high-level risk countries.

3.6. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)

DG ECHO is committed to developing appropriate exit transition and strategies for humanitarian assistance (the **linkage between relief, rehabilitation and development “LRRD”**). In 2007, new external instruments (Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI), Stability Instrument in particular) have come on stream, presenting a new environment for the implementation of LRRD. A particular effort was made by the relevant Commission services to ensure improved articulation between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. A list of pilot countries was set up where the LRRD approach received particular attention. This non-exhaustive list included Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Sudan and Uganda. DG ECHO also contributed to the work led by DG Development on countries in situations of fragility.

3.7. Main partners in the humanitarian operations

The humanitarian aid provided by DG ECHO is implemented through partners. DG ECHO works with about 200 non-governmental organisations, United Nations agencies and International Organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies.

Having a wide and diverse range of partners is important for DG ECHO. It ensures the efficient coverage of an increasing list of needs all over the world. DG ECHO has developed close working relationships with its partners at the level of both policy issues and management of humanitarian operations.

In 2007, DG ECHO implemented its operations through NGOs (47%), United Nations agencies (42%) and International organisations (11%). For more details on the annual spread between families of partners, see annex section VI.6.

4. RELATIONS WITH OTHER EU INSTITUTIONS, MEMBER STATES, MAJOR HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS AND NON-EU DONORS

As in previous years, DG ECHO pursued its active relationship with other Institutions, Member States and International Organisations and continued to promote the respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles (humanity, impartiality, non-discrimination and neutrality), particularly in relation to developments under the Common Foreign and Security Policy, such as EUFOR Chad.

It also ensured that the obligation to respect the humanitarian space during emergencies has been taken into account in the European and international debate. DG ECHO also developed a solid working relationship with the recently appointed Humanitarian Rapporteur of the European Parliament.

In the framework of its relations with non-EU donors, DG ECHO maintained contacts with the US (USAID²¹ and PRM²²), in particular through regular videoconferences, addressing

²¹ United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

²² Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration - US (PRM)

general policy issues and humanitarian operations in specific countries with a view to ensuring a coherent and complementary response.

Finally, in order to ensure a strategic and reliable dialogue between DG ECHO and its partners, DG ECHO organises annual high-level Strategic Partnership Dialogues (SPDs) with each organisation (UN-agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement (ICRC and IFRC).

More details on these partners are given in annex – section VI.6.

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES

In the context of its activities, DG ECHO has also to deal with other issues to support the delivery and quality of Humanitarian Aid:

- (1) Development of DG ECHO's **security and safety** policy for staff involved in the delivery of humanitarian aid;
- (2) Strengthening of its **rapid response capacity** in the field by organising multi-sectoral teams;
- (3) **Communication strategy and information**
- (4) On training initiatives, DG ECHO supports the **Network on Humanitarian Assistance** (NOHA) which offers a multi-disciplinary post-graduate diploma.

Details of these activities are given in Annex – section IV.

The proper implementation of DG ECHO-funded operations is ensured through several layers of checks and controls at various stages in the project cycle of humanitarian operations. Various aspects of the control strategy developed by DG ECHO, its supervision and monitoring procedures are described in Annex – section V.

6. CONCLUSION

There was no major new humanitarian crisis in 2007. However, natural disasters caused very serious damage and it is probable that their magnitude, strength and frequency will continue to increase in the future, accentuated by climate change. In parallel, the number of conflicts has not changed, but tends to last longer and are increasingly destructive, affecting more often already vulnerable populations.