



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from: General Secretariat
to: Delegations

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Subject: Council Conclusions on the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps

Delegations will find in the Annex to this note the above Council Conclusions, which were adopted by the Council on 17 May 2011.

Council Conclusions on the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps

1. The Council recalls the specific legal basis in the Treaty¹ for establishing a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations of the Union, and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid as a basic policy framework.
2. The Council reaffirms the key role of the EU in promoting volunteering as a concrete expression of European solidarity with people affected by crises.
3. The Council recognises the importance of increasing the professionalism of humanitarian aid actors and the need to address their safety and security, in particular in complex emergencies.
4. The Council emphasises the need to set clear requirements for the identification, selection, training and deployment of volunteers.
5. The Council acknowledges the need to support local capacities in disaster prevention, preparedness, humanitarian response and post-disaster settings.
6. In this context, the Council welcomes the Commission Communication entitled How to express EU citizen's solidarity through volunteering: First reflections on a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) and its step-by-step approach to the establishment of EVHAC.

¹ Art. 214 TFEU.

7. The Council underlines that EVHAC should not encroach upon the Commission's existing humanitarian aid and civil protection budget and that it should be set-up based on a thorough cost-benefit analysis.
8. The Council underlines that EVHAC should be cost-effective, should build upon existing national and international voluntary schemes without duplicating them, and as part of a global approach, should be focused at addressing concrete needs and gaps in the humanitarian field.
9. The Council underlines that EVHAC can make a useful contribution to the European and international humanitarian assistance by focusing its activities on supporting existing local humanitarian and civil protection organisations, in cooperation with recipient authorities. The EVHAC should not be set up as an operational humanitarian or civil protection organisation in its own right.
10. The Council emphasises the need for EVHAC to provide added value to the EU humanitarian assistance and its beneficiaries, especially in pre- and post-crisis contexts, as well as to increase awareness raising and visibility of EU assistance.
11. These Conclusions, alongside the results of the preparatory action, the Impact Assessment, and the on-going consultations, should guide the Commission in the assessment of the different options with regard to the framework and management structure of EVHAC.
12. The Council calls on the Member States, the Commission and other relevant stakeholders, including international and civil society organisations, to continue regular and systematic consultations with a view to establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.