

New orientations for the EU's humanitarian action

2021/2163(INI) - 15/12/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 551 votes to 63, with 83 abstentions, a resolution on new orientations for the EU's humanitarian action.

Humanitarian needs are at an all-time high, with **238 million people in need of assistance in 2021**, mainly due to conflict, but also to systemic factors such as climate change, natural disasters, environmental degradation, global population growth, food insecurity, limited water resources and failed governance. The COVID-19 outbreak has further exacerbated the global humanitarian crisis.

Addressing growing needs and reducing the funding gap

Parliament welcomed the Commission's communication on EU humanitarian action and called for the rapid implementation of these proposals in close consultation and cooperation with humanitarian partners to ensure that aid is predictable, not fragmented and does not duplicate other actions.

Members consider that EU humanitarian aid should always be provided solely on the basis of **well-defined and pre-assessed needs**, fully in line with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and pay particular attention to the difficulties faced by vulnerable groups. The Commission is invited to place the principle of **'no one left behind'** at the heart of the new approach to humanitarian action.

Concerned about the sharp increase in the humanitarian funding gap, Parliament called on the Commission to provide a **robust annual budget** for EU humanitarian aid and maintain a ring-fenced envelope within the solidarity and emergency aid reserve for humanitarian crises outside the EU. Members called for an **increase in funds** for humanitarian aid and urged Member States to set an example and allocate a fixed share of their gross national income to humanitarian aid

The Commission and the European External Action Service are asked to develop a **long-term strategy for working with third countries**, in particular emerging donors, to increase the number of donor countries contributing to humanitarian aid on a voluntary basis. Members called for the establishment of an EU coordination mechanism to ensure a coherent EU approach to international humanitarian law. They also highlighted the potential for blended funding initiatives further involving the private sector in EU humanitarian aid.

The resolution also called on the Commission and the Member States to: (i) closely monitor violations of international humanitarian law and include violations of international humanitarian law as a criterion for listing individuals or entities under the relevant EU sanctions regimes and (ii) prosecute and sanction those who use starvation as a weapon of war in order to combat widespread violations of the right to food during conflicts.

Supporting a more enabling environment for humanitarian aid

Stressing the importance of supporting local actors, Members urged the Commission to develop an **ambitious localisation policy** (especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic) that promotes

transparency, making use of partners' expertise and experience, and outlining how to provide more and better support for local respondents to strengthen their capacities, enable them to make use of all the instruments available and ensure their involvement in decision-making processes.

Taking into account the specific aid and protection needs of disaster-affected populations, the resolution called on the Commission to provide the necessary resources for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction through, inter alia, the Neighbourhood Instrument, development cooperation and international cooperation, in the framework of an approach based on the triple nexus of **humanitarian aid, development and peace** involving indigenous peoples and local communities.

The Commission and the European External Action Service are invited to adopt a communication developing a clear policy on a **humanitarian-development-peace nexus** in order to address the root causes of fragility and conflict, drawing in particular on the practical experience of non-governmental organisations.

Members called for more concrete **gender mainstreaming** in future humanitarian action while advocating for free access to free public health services. They called on the EU to implement the Nansen Initiative programme on cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change and to place particular emphasis on food as a basic right for all.

Lastly, Parliament insisted that the first European Humanitarian Forum in January 2022 should be inclusive and accessible, involve humanitarian implementing partners and seek to increase the visibility of EU humanitarian aid.