

H.E. Alexander Schallenberg
Minister
Federal Ministry for Europe,
Integration and Foreign Affairs
Minoritenplatz 8
1010 Vienna

Vienna, 19 December 2019

**Subject: Recommendations with regard to humanitarian aid in the next EU
Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**

Dear Mr. Schallenberg,

Global Responsibility, the Austrian Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid, together with the VOICE network of 85 European humanitarian NGOs would like to draw your attention to a number of recommendations with regard to humanitarian aid in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

There are more than 148 million people worldwide in need of humanitarian assistance, according to the United Nations 2019 Global Humanitarian Overview¹. This means that one in every 70 people is caught in crisis and needs assistance, protection, shelter, food, water, sanitation or urgent healthcare. Humanitarian assistance benefits from broad support across Europe. 88% of European citizens are convinced of the importance of humanitarian activities at EU level². EU funds enable humanitarian aid to have a massive impact: with less than 1% of the EU budget, through its partners - NGOs, the Red Cross family and the UN - the EU provides life-saving humanitarian assistance to victims of disasters and conflicts around the globe every year. However, the global funding gap to assist all people in need remains high and humanitarian donors, together with operational partners, must strive to provide both more funding and more effective, efficient and quality humanitarian aid. The EU must continue to do its part and contribute proportionally to respond to global needs.

We therefore would like to draw your attention to the following recommendations:

- 1) Maintain the existing capacity to rapidly mobilise additional funds for humanitarian responses to crises outside the EU. The Emergency Aid Reserve has been vital in ensuring this capacity.**

¹ [UN 2019 Global Humanitarian Overview](#) (2019)

² [Eurobarometer on humanitarian aid](#) (2017)



We call on the Member States to ensure that after the merge³ of the European Aid Reserve (EAR) with the Solidarity Fund there will be strict ring fencing between internal and external purposes and that different rules govern the fund's mobilisation to ensure rapid disbursement of funds for immediate lifesaving purposes.

The EU needs flexibility to be prepared for unpredictable and escalating crises. Since 2014, the EAR has been one of the key sources of additional funding for humanitarian aid to swiftly address suddenly increasing needs and unforeseen crises in non-EU countries. By their nature, sudden crises cannot be foreseen and specifically planned for in the main humanitarian aid budget line. Flexibility and speed are key features of the EAR that needs to be maintained through the rules for disbursement in the new instrument.

The Solidarity Fund and the EAR are two very different instruments in terms of their purpose and functioning. Humanitarians are concerned that their merger would also result in unfortunate and unnecessary competition for funds to help people in need within or outside the EU, and in potentially life-threatening delays in mobilising the funds. While solidarity between European peoples affected by disasters is a priority that humanitarian European NGOs support, under the next MFF, the EU must also ring-fence funds to ensure the means to continue fulfilling its commitment to save lives, and prevent and alleviate suffering around the world.

2) Increase the allocation for the humanitarian aid instrument to contribute to helping the growing number of people in need: €12.5 billion for the seven years

We ask you to support and go beyond the Commission's proposal for the allocation for humanitarian aid.

A larger envelope for humanitarian aid would allow the EU to address growing needs for humanitarian assistance, and contribute to more timely and predictable funding. Spending for humanitarian aid in the last five years has systematically been close to or above €1.5 billion by the end of the year, while starting from a lower budget line of under €1 billion according to the current MFF ceiling. An increased allocation from the start of the year would allow for better planning and more efficient administration of humanitarian aid operations/projects funded by the European Commission.

Global Responsibility and the VOICE network considers that an envelope of €12.5 billion for seven years would allow a progressive increase from €1.6 billion to €2 billion in 2027 and allow flexibility to adapt to the dynamic pattern of changing needs.

For more information and explanations on our recommendations, please find attached to this letter the [VOICE position paper for the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework](#).

³ The [Council's position](#) from June 2019 is to merge the two instruments.



We count on you to support these recommendations for a principled, efficient and flexible humanitarian aid process that expresses the EU's solidarity with people affected by crises and disasters worldwide.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Annelies Vilim
Director
Global Responsibility