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Annual report on the European Union's humanitarian aid operations
financed in 2019

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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

Annual report on the European Union's humanitarian aid operations financed in 2019

INTRODUCTION	2
HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS supported in 2019	2
Overview of the main humanitarian aid operations supported	2
Horizontal priorities	8
Summary of evaluations completed in 2019	10
2019 budget	11
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SOURCES	12
List of partners having signed the 2014 Framework Partnership	12

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the European Union's (EU) main activities and policy outcomes in 2019 in the field of humanitarian aid, as funded through the European Commission (EC). The report is prepared pursuant to Article 19 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996.

HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS supported in 2019

In 2019, humanitarian needs kept increasing due to complex crises – often causing massive population displacement – as well as to natural disasters and epidemic outbreaks. Against this background, the EC Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) remained a leading humanitarian donor, allocating EUR 2.4 billion to millions of crisis-affected people in more than 80 countries. To address the growing humanitarian funding gap, DG ECHO continued promoting the implementation of the [Grand Bargain commitments](#), notably in relation to [multi-sectoral joint needs assessment](#).

A significant proportion of the EU humanitarian aid was devoted to crisis-affected people inside Syria and its neighbouring countries, including the humanitarian component of the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey. The EU also focused on supporting populations in "forgotten crises", such as in the Central African Republic, Sudan, Pakistan, Colombia, Venezuela, Haiti, and the Philippines.

DG ECHO played a leading role in the promotion of a principled humanitarian aid and respect of international humanitarian law. It did so through active advocacy for specific humanitarian crises, but also globally as chair of the Donor Support Group¹ of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative² (with Switzerland).

DG ECHO funds and uses for its evidence-based approach, the INFORM Risk index developed by the JRC, and which is becoming the de-facto risk assessment methodology for many organisations such as the UN and INGO's.

Overview of the main humanitarian aid operations supported

Sahel – complex crisis

The EU responded to the emergency humanitarian needs in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon, by allocating EUR 188 million. This included Rapid Response Mechanisms (a three-month multi-sectorial emergency aid package) and support to existing national structures to maintain access to basic services. EU aid helped access to hard-to-reach areas through Humanitarian Air Services, humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination and information management.

The EU provided food during the lean season and nutrition treatment for children suffering from severe acute malnutrition and in need of life-saving treatment. Moreover, the EU was

¹ The ICRC Donor Support Group is made up of governments, supranational organizations or international institutions that contribute a minimum of 10 million CHF per year.

² The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative is an informal donor forum that brings together 42 donors committed to providing effective and accountable humanitarian assistance.

working actively on implementing the humanitarian-development nexus to build resilience of crisis-affected people, and addressing the root causes of food insecurity and acute under-nutrition.

Central African Republic regional crisis

Despite the signing of a peace agreement in February, the humanitarian situation has not improved in the Central African Republic (CAR). EUR 22.4 million was provided to CAR and Central African refugees in Cameroon and Chad, providing multi-sectoral humanitarian aid, and reinforcing humanitarian coordination, security and logistics.

Lake Chad Basin crisis

Out of 17.4 million people living in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, 10.7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, including more than 6 million children. The EU provided about EUR 64 million of multi-sectoral humanitarian aid.

South Sudan

In 2019, around 7.5 million South Sudanese were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, and neighbouring countries were hosting more than 2 million refugees from the country. The EU allocated EUR 51.6 million to South Sudan, addressing the high level of food insecurity and malnutrition across the country. Protection of children and women is a priority for the EU, given the extreme levels of violence and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Sudan

The country suffered from the effects of decades of conflict compounded by an unprecedented economic crisis and a rising price of food, and having 25% of the population at very high levels of severe food insecurity. During the year, the bulk of the EU humanitarian aid – EUR 55.7 million – went to food assistance, nutritional care and treatment, mainly for children under 5 years and pregnant or breastfeeding women. In order to increase people's access to long-term social protection in Sudan, the EU is complementing humanitarian funding with development assistance to help communities build resilience.

The Great Lakes regional crisis

Both the DRC and Republic of Congo were affected by continuous conflict and by the Ebola Virus Disease. The Commission allocated around EUR 72 million to the region, including response to the Ebola Virus Disease. An additional EUR 7 million were spent on the ECHO Flight operations.

Ethiopia

As a result of ethnically motivated violence, the number of internally displaced persons (IDP) in Ethiopia reached a peak of 3.1 million in early 2019, before decreasing to 2 million. Despite the fact that safety and security conditions were not always met, the authorities tried to return displaced persons to their place of origin, thus violating the principles of voluntary and safe returns. The EU provided EUR 51.5 million in 2019 to assist the affected people with food, shelter, essential household items, malnutrition treatment, water, sanitation and protection services. The largest share of funding was dedicated to persons fleeing from persisting violence and destruction of their homes and livelihoods.

Kenya

Kenya hosts about 490 000 refugees, whilst the government's encampment policy makes refugees completely dependent on aid. A new drought caused food insecurity for about 2.6 million people, displacement of population, and an elevated risk of conflict over scarce pasture and water.

EU funding for Kenya amounted to EUR 15.95 million, including EUR 11.5 million for the refugees camps, EUR 1.3 million for the Disaster Preparedness in three counties prone to sudden onset disasters, and EUR 3.15 million in emergency response to the drought and floods outside camps.

Somalia

The humanitarian needs remained high due to the continued erratic weather patterns and the armed conflict. A new drought contributed to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, while the end of the year was marked by an above-average rainy season in the South of the country, causing severe riverine floods. The latter affected over 500,000 people, displacing 370 000, and destroying crops. As a result, it undermined the population's coping capacity and delayed recovery. The Commission allocated about EUR 63 million in response to the crisis.

Uganda

Uganda has hosted 1.41 million refugees, of whom 91 percent from South Sudan and the DRC. Moreover, since August 2018, the country has been at high risk of receiving the Ebola Virus Disease from the neighbouring DRC, which experiences the largest outbreak ever. The EU allocated EUR 33 million for protection, food assistance, health care, access to safe water and sanitation services, and education assistance to refugees and their host communities. In addition, support was provided for Ebola preparedness, monitoring and response, and to raise resilience and self-sufficiency of the most vulnerable people to reduce their dependency on long-term aid.

Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region (SAIO)

Extreme weather events are a regular occurrence in SAIO, and are becoming more frequent and intense due to the climate change. The EU allocated over EUR 66 million to SAIO for emergency humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness, and emphasised strengthening the capacity of communities and disaster management authorities to cope with recurrent natural disasters.

Two powerful cyclones hit Southern Africa and affected three million people in Zambia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Zimbabwe Malawi and the Comoros". The EU responded immediately with humanitarian assistance to the affected countries, including an activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism in Mozambique.

While facing an economic crisis, Zimbabwe was hit by shocks such as cyclone Idai, resulting in 7.7 million people – more than 50% of the population – being severely food insecure. The EU allocated EUR 31.6 million in response to the impact of the cyclone, mainly focusing on humanitarian food assistance and disaster preparedness.

Venezuela

Venezuela's socio-economic collapse resulted in the displacement of 3.9 million Venezuelans in 2019. According to UN OCHA, at least 7 million people were in need of humanitarian

assistance, mainly due to a lack of access to health services, education, food and nutrition.

A total of EUR 55 million was allocated by the EU for the provision of humanitarian aid to displaced people and support to host communities. To ensure a close follow-up of interventions, DG ECHO established an office in Caracas in May. Increased efforts on humanitarian advocacy contributed to opening the humanitarian space in the country, and DG ECHO was on the frontline at the Venezuela Solidarity Conference in Brussels in October.

Colombia

The humanitarian situation in Colombia deteriorated sharply due to the escalating internal conflict, compounded by the impact of having received 1.6 million Venezuelan refugees. Colombia is highly prone to natural disasters and conflict-affected municipalities are particularly at risk. Around 140 000 people were displaced and more than 350 000 suffered mobility restrictions, which resulted in a lack of access to livelihoods and basic services. An estimated 350 000 Colombian refugees were hosted in neighbouring countries.

EUR 11 million was allocated by DG ECHO to help people hit by conflict and natural disasters in Colombia and the region. Aid sectors included protection, health care, water and sanitation, education and disaster preparedness.

Haiti

Political turmoil, increased violence and economic downturn in Haiti caused an erosion of the already weak purchasing power of the most vulnerable households, with 3.7 million people in acute food crisis. DG ECHO provided EUR 14 million to respond to the acute food insecurity and to support humanitarian coordination. An additional EUR 3 million were invested in disaster preparedness.

The Afghan crisis (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran)

Afghanistan bears one of the deadliest conflicts worldwide with 17 million people (50% of the country's population) living in areas highly affected by conflict, of which 3.4 million people are internally displaced. There are around 10 million Afghan refugees worldwide, documented or undocumented. Iran and Pakistan are the main recipients of Afghan refugees, hosting and assisting almost 3 and 4 million respectively.

DG ECHO allocated EUR 61 million to Afghanistan, focusing on emergency response and trauma care. In Iran and Pakistan, EU humanitarian aid assisted Afghan refugees and the most vulnerable local populations with EUR 18 million. The EU supported education to Afghan children in Iran, which entailed also a registration of their families. Other sectors of EU assistance in both Iran and Pakistan were water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), food security & livelihoods, shelter, protection and health.

Rohingya Crisis (Myanmar, Bangladesh)

The Rohingya population of Myanmar has been exposed to systematic discrimination and targeted violence. At the end of 2019 there were 855,000 Rohingya refugees registered by UNHCR in Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh), in an extremely congested mega-camp. The refugees have been completely dependent on humanitarian aid, due to lack of freedom of movement, of

livelihood opportunities and access to social services. In addition, the area is extremely prone to natural disasters. About 600 000 Rohingyas still lived in the Rakhine State of Myanmar in dire conditions, part of them in confinement camps and completely dependent on humanitarian aid.

The EU has provided EUR 36 million of humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya crisis, both in Bangladesh and Myanmar, consisting of basic health care, water, sanitation, shelter, nutrition, education, protection, psychosocial support and disaster risk reduction.

Philippines

Mindanao has been enduring long-standing internal conflicts, with about 400 000 people in need of humanitarian assistance (including IDPs and returnees). In addition, the Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. The EU allocated a total of EUR 6.7 million to the country for humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected people in Mindanao (emergency shelters, WASH services, health, food and non-food items, education), as well as emergency response to natural disasters and disaster preparedness actions.

The Syria Crisis

The Syria conflict is in its ninth year, with more than 11 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside the country. A total of EUR 260 million was provided by the EU to deliver life-saving assistance inside Syria and for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt for delivery of food, medicine, water, and shelter. In neighbouring Lebanon and Jordan, EU humanitarian funding contributed to cash assistance for the most vulnerable refugees, as the most cost-efficient and dignified delivery mode.

DG ECHO was directly involved in international diplomatic initiatives such as the third Conference "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region" held in Brussels, the Humanitarian Task Force of the International Syria Support Group in Geneva, the Senior Officials meetings organised in February in Geneva and November in Copenhagen.

Iraq

In Iraq 6.7 million people were still in need of humanitarian assistance, including 1.6 million IDPs of which 375 000 in camps. DG ECHO deployed operations worth EUR 38 million for emergency health care, basic shelter, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, and humanitarian protection, with a particular focus on IDPs. It supported assistance for survivors of sexual violence, and the provision of physical therapy and rehabilitation support for victims of the conflict, particularly for targeted groups such as the Yezidis in northwest Iraq.

DG ECHO supported the resumption of basic public services in war-affected areas, helping 4.5 million to return home. This support included education in emergencies (EiE), to help bring children back to school, often after years of interruption.

DG ECHO provided legal assistance to families to obtain identification papers that were lost or not produced under the so-called Islamic State's control, basic services in overcrowded prisons, assistance for minors in detention centres, and community-based mechanisms to reintegrate former child soldiers.

Yemen

The country is experiencing the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with 24.1 million persons (80% of the population) in need of assistance, of which 3 million are internally displaced. Food insecurity affects 20 million Yemenis, with at least 238 000 people in famine conditions. In addition, the country faces a collapse of health services, leaving 19.7 million people in need, 460 000 suspected cases of cholera, restricted and insufficient imports of food, fuel and medicine, and school closures.

DG ECHO deployed operations worth EUR 115 million to provide food, healthcare, education as well as water, shelter and hygiene kits to war-affected areas and displaced populations. The funding was used for treatment of severely malnourished children, fighting the cholera epidemic and outbreaks of measles and diphtheria, rehabilitation for the disabled, rehabilitation of classrooms, and support to the United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS), which provides critical and reliable air and sea transport to humanitarian aid workers.

Turkey

Turkey continues to host the largest refugee community in the world, with 3.6 million Syrians under temporary protection and around 370,000 non-Syrians registered under international protection. In total, under the first and second tranche of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRiT), the EU provided EUR 2.4 billion in humanitarian aid that supported around 1.7 million refugees through 64 projects, through 19 partner organisations working on basic needs, non-formal education, protection and health.

In 2019 DG ECHO contracted EUR 1.021 billion, largely to the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN). This flagship programme provided 1.7 million refugees with monthly cash payments through a debit card to address their basic needs. The Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) is the EiE program that reached more than 560,000 children. It provides cash transfers to vulnerable families to promote school enrolment and regular attendance for refugee children.

Western Balkans

At the beginning of 2018 a new 'sub-route' for refugees emerged, leading through Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) towards Croatia and Slovenia. 29 000 People of Concern arrived to BiH in 2019, compared to 24 000 in 2018. The total number of migrants and refugees in the country are about 8 000, of which around 2 000 sleep rough (in squats, abandoned buildings or railway stations). The EU humanitarian aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina amounted to EUR 3.8 million. Through its humanitarian partners, DG ECHO provided health, protection and outreach assistance (including identification of vulnerable individuals, provision of emergency food and non-food items, medical assistance, etc.) to refugees and migrants.

Ukraine

The conflict is affecting over 5.2 million people, of which 3.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, mainly in the non-government controlled areas and along both sides of the contact line. The EU, together with its Member States is the biggest donor of

humanitarian and early recovery/development assistance to Ukraine. It has provided over EUR 762.5 million since the beginning of the conflict, of which approximately half in humanitarian aid. The EU (through the EC) has to date provided over EUR 141.8 million in humanitarian aid, of which EUR 23 million in 2019 to 11 partners working on both sides of the line of contact in 6 sectors of intervention, i.e.: health, shelter, water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH), education, basic needs and protection.

Libya

820 000 Libyans are in need of humanitarian assistance. 20% of the health facilities are closed due to destruction, damage or occupation. There has been rampant crime against International Humanitarian Law, human trafficking and obstacles to aid delivery and access by aid organisations.

DG ECHO deployed operations worth EUR 8 million that supported essential health care for victims of the conflict, including emergency war surgery, trauma kits, physical rehabilitation, prosthesis and psychosocial support, provision of essential medicines and care of gender-based violence survivors. The aid restored primary healthcare services in conflict-affected areas and essential education in Benghazi and Sirte, which enabled thousands of children to access basic education and psychosocial support. The EU also provided food assistance and livelihood support, as well as cash-based assistance to the most vulnerable people. Services were provided indiscriminately to all vulnerable people, including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Egypt

250 000 registered refugees are stranded in the most overcrowded and poorest neighbourhoods of large cities such as Cairo and Alexandria, where also the hosting communities suffer from a high level of vulnerability. About 50% of the refugees are from Syria, and the rest are mainly from East Africa, Iraq and Yemen.

In 2019 DG ECHO deployed operations worth EUR 5 million, offering humanitarian protection, emergency health services (in particularly maternal and reproductive healthcare), EiE, and cash to cover basic needs. 38% of all refugees are children, with a share of unaccompanied and separated children increasing.

Saharawi Crisis

After four decades of unresolved political conflict with humanitarian consequences, tens of thousands of Sahrawi refugees are stranded in a forgotten and protracted crisis. They live in 5 camps in the desert of southwest Algeria, depending on humanitarian aid for their survival.

DG ECHO deployed operations worth EUR 9 million, supplying food and tackling the rising malnutrition among Sahrawi refugee children and women, as well as providing safe drinking water. It also furnished essential medicines, covering 80% of the health needs of the population in the camps, and specific support for people with disabilities. Moreover, DG ECHO provided EiE, mitigating the poor state of the education infrastructures and sanitary facilities in schools.

Horizontal priorities

In line with its previous commitments, DG ECHO dedicated 10% of the EU's 2019 humanitarian aid budget to Education in Emergencies and maintained its commitment to deliver 35% of humanitarian assistance through cash transfers. 2019 also saw the adoption of Operational Guidance on "[The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations](#)".

Education in Emergencies (EiE)

DG ECHO continued to act as a global champion for EiE. The funding dedicated by DG ECHO to EiE amounted to EUR 166 million, supporting activities in 52 countries and benefiting over 2.5 million beneficiaries, securing access to safe and quality education for girls and boys in the most vulnerable situations.

To raise awareness and visibility of EiE, DG ECHO hosted in May 2019 a High Level Event on "Education in Emergencies: School4All" with Commissioner Christos Stylianides, Nobel Peace Prize winner Denis Mukwege, Handicap International ambassador Axelle Red and singer Typh Barrow. DG ECHO launched a social media campaign #RaiseYourPencil for #School4All to show solidarity with all crisis-affected children who are out of school.

Cash assistance

DG ECHO continued to drive forward discussions on cash transfers. It has been instrumental in fostering greater donor coordination through the adoption of a joint donor statement on cash in the two pilot countries Nigeria and Bangladesh.

DG ECHO published the "[EU Cash Compendium 2019: Doing More Cash, Better](#)", which highlights results at project-level with reference to the recommendations outlined in DG ECHO's Large-scale Cash Guidance Note. The document highlights what the projects do differently, how they follow the recommendations of DG ECHO's Large-scale Cash Guidance Note, and how they ensure coordination with other donors and with social safety nets, as well as challenges and lessons learned. Efficiency ratios of 85:15 (85% of funding reaching the targeted beneficiaries) and above, as envisioned in the Guidance Note, are already being achieved in several countries.

Innovation and private sector engagement

DG ECHO continued to engage in the global debate, notably at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Humanitarian Affairs Segment, the UN General Assembly and at the Berlin donor meeting on the Future of Innovation in Humanitarian Action. DG ECHO continued to support the development of innovative approaches through the Thematic Policies Annex to the Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs), which encourages partners to lower the environmental footprint of humanitarian response by using digital approaches, and by supporting the European Innovation Council Horizon 2020 Prize for 'Affordable High-Tech for Humanitarian Aid', to be awarded in 2020.

EU Leadership of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Emergencies

DG ECHO is a member of the global initiative Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies. An Enhanced Response Capacity (DG ECHO programme) project run by UNFPA promoted the development of inter-agency standards on GBV in emergencies, and guidance on how to develop context-specific Call to Action Road Maps (from pilots in Nigeria and DRC). During 2018 and 2019, DG ECHO allocated approximately €52 million euro to prevent and respond to sexual and GBV. DG ECHO launched its first-ever e-learning on its Gender-Age Marker.

ECHO Flight (Africa) and support to Humanitarian Air Transport Services

ECHO Flight is a humanitarian air service with six aircrafts, has a budget of 12.4 million and is free of charge for DG ECHO's partners and humanitarian organisations. In 2019, it supported over 250 projects, transported over 25 000 humanitarian aid workers, and around 200 tons of humanitarian cargo.

Moreover, EU contributed to not-for-profit humanitarian air services such as EUR 25 million to the WFP/ United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) and its logistics operations in 12 countries.

Summary of evaluations completed in 2019

[Combined evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in Central Africa, and of humanitarian coordination \(2014-2018\)](#)

The EU made important contributions to addressing acute needs and strengthening humanitarian responses in Central Africa. DG ECHO's activities, and the reliable delivery of intended results through partners and support to UN OCHA's coordination function, particularly in filling coordination gaps, were assets.

The evaluation highlighted challenges, related to addressing chronic needs and coordination gaps that persist, and offered recommendations to support future EU humanitarian assistance and coordination in the region.

[Combined evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in Afghanistan, and of the partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council \(2014-2018\)](#)

The evaluation found DG ECHO to be a key player in the Afghanistan aid context and that it is supporting the synergy between development and humanitarian actions. DG ECHO's actions are helping with immediate after-effects of conflict and disasters, Its Emergency Response Mechanism and cash assistance (mostly deliver need-based response) to IDPs.

The partnership evaluation found that a high-quality partnership existed. Strong evidence of regular, comprehensive and transparent exchange of information at all levels existed- with trust being the key factor. There were some weaknesses too: some processes were inefficient, there were some lapses in internal communications, and audit requirements came at considerable

cost to both.

2019 budget

1. List of funding agreements concluded by the Commission in the field of humanitarian aid³:
 Agreements for humanitarian aid awarded by the EU can be found on the Financial Transparency System (FTS) website

2. Budget implementation

ECHO 2019 BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

Excluding external assigned revenue from Member States

Region/country	Amount	%
Africa	632	29%
Sudan & South Sudan	105	
Central Africa	68	
Great Lakes	72	
Horn of Africa	163	
Southern Africa, Indian Ocean	60	
West Africa	138	
North Africa	17	
Africa	10	
Middle East, Southeast Europe and Eastern neighbourhood	1.062	50%
Middle East	436	
Southeast Europe and Eastern neighbourhood	627	
Asia, Pacific	127	6%
South West and Central Asia	75	
South East Asia and Pacific	52	
Latin America, Caribbean	104	5%
Latin America	84	
Caribbean	20	
Worldwide disasters	40	2%
Civil protection⁴	95	4%
EU Aid Volunteers	18	1%
Complementary operations and support	68	3%

³ Including names of partner organisations concerned.

⁴ Activities under this item are not covered under the Humanitarian Aid Regulation and are not financed by the Humanitarian Aid budget.

TOTAL

2.146

100%

(in million €)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SOURCES

- General information on DG ECHO:
<http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en>
- Financial information on the European Commission's humanitarian aid activities in 2019:
https://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/financing-decisions-hips-2019_en
- Operational information from previous years:
https://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/accountability/annual-reports_en
- 2019 Annual Activity Report, DG ECHO:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-activity-report-2019-european-civil-protection-and-humanitarian-aid-operations-echo_en
- 2019 Annual Management and Performance Report:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-management-and-performance-report-2019_en
- DG ECHO's evaluation reports:
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/evaluations_en
- European Commission and Member States' humanitarian aid funding data:
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hac/>
- INFORM Global Risk Index
<https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index>

List of partners having signed the 2014 Framework Partnership

<http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/weblistpartners.pdf>