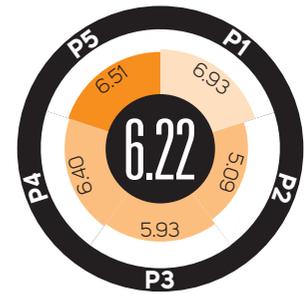


# EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HRI 2011  
Ranking  
**7th**

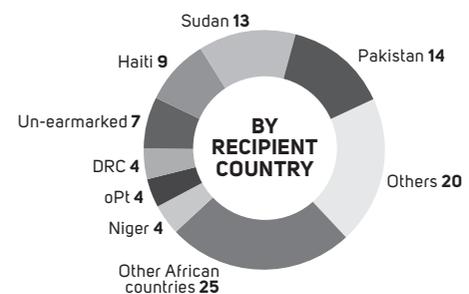
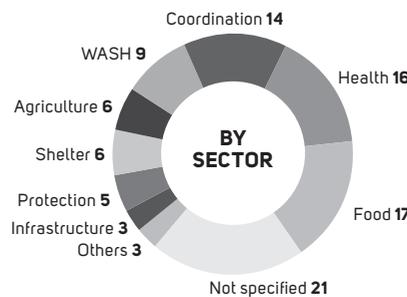
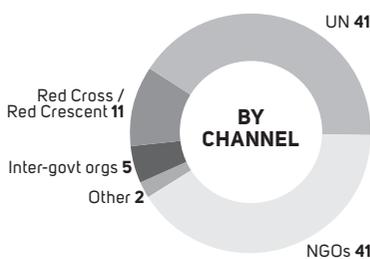


Group **2**  
LEARNING  
LEADERS

**HUMANITARIAN AID**

**13.0%**  
of ODA

## HUMANITARIAN AID DISTRIBUTION (%)



### GENDER RATING

POLICY

FUNDING

FIELD PERCEPTION

### STRENGTHS

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% above OECD/DAC average
3	QT	Funding NGOs	10.00	+120.5%
5	QT	Participating in accountability initiatives	9.86	+120.4%
5	QT	Funding accountability initiatives	6.78	+64.9%
5	QL	Implementing evaluation recommendations	5.81	+35.5%
4	QL	Facilitating safe access	6.55	+28.5%

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% below OECD/DAC average
3	QT	Un-earmarked funding	0.48	-90.7%
1	QT	Timely funding to sudden onset emergencies	5.35	-33.5%
1	QT	Timely funding to complex emergencies	6.51	-17.7%
3	QL	Flexibility of funding	5.97	-13.9%
5	QL	Appropriate reporting requirements	6.60	-6.9%

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The European Commission (EC) ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the HRI 2011, dropping one position from 2010. Based on the pattern of its scores, the EC is classified as a Group 2 donor, "Learning Leaders". Donors in this group are characterised by their leading role in support of emergency relief efforts, strong capacity and field presence, and commitment to learning and improvement. They tend to do less well in areas such as prevention, preparedness, and risk reduction efforts. Other Group 2 donors include Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The EC's overall score is above the OECD/DAC and Group 2 averages. The EC scored above the OECD/DAC and Group 2

averages on all pillars, with the exception of Pillar 1 (Responding to needs), where it scored below the OECD/DAC and Group 2 averages. In all pillars, the EC scores significantly higher in the qualitative, survey-based indicators than in the quantitative indicators.

The EC did best compared to its OECD/DAC peers in the indicators on *Funding NGOs*, *Participating in accountability initiatives*, *Funding accountability initiatives*, *Implementing evaluation recommendations* and *Facilitating safe access*. Its scores were relatively the lowest in indicators on *Un-earmarked funding*, *Timely funding to sudden onset emergencies*, *Timely funding to complex emergencies*, *Flexibility of funding* and *Appropriate reporting requirements*.

# AID DISTRIBUTION

Humanitarian assistance represented 13% of the European Commission's (EC) Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2010.

According to data reported to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) (2011), in 2010, the EC channelled 41.5% of its humanitarian aid to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), 41.1% to

UN agencies, 10.9% to the Red Crescent/Red Cross Movement, 4.9% to intergovernmental organisations and 0.9% to private organisations and foundations. The EC provided humanitarian assistance to a total of 76 crises in 2010: 30 in Africa, 26 in Asia and 13 in the Americas, five in Europe, and two in Oceania. Pakistan, Sudan and Haiti received the largest amount of assistance in 2010.

# POLICY FRAMEWORK

The EC's humanitarian aid is managed by the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO). ECHO is supported by contributions from 27 EU member states and is complementary to the countries' individual allocations for humanitarian assistance. The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid specifically highlights the importance of gender-sensitive approaches, and ECHO operates under a mandate laid out in European Council Regulation No. 1257/96, through EC Budget Title 23. Additional humanitarian funding come from both the budget line for emergency aid to African-Caribbean-Pacific countries within the European Development Fund and from an Emergency Aid Reserve, which allows funds to be rapidly allocated to unanticipated crises. ECHO's current

humanitarian policy is outlined in the 2007 *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, its corresponding *Consensus Action Plan* (2008) and *Mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan* (2010) and an annual strategy document. ECHO has also developed sectoral policies for its humanitarian aid. The EC places great importance on humanitarian aid, and to this end, appointed a Commissioner solely for this purpose (European Commission 2010a, p.3). ECHO maintains 50 field offices: 22 in Sub-Saharan Africa, 17 in Asia, five in the Middle-East & North Africa, four in Latin America/Caribbean, and two in Europe. Humanitarian assistance represented 12.00% of the European Commission's Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2010.

## HOW DOES DOES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S POLICY ADDRESS GHD CONCEPTS?

# GENDER

The EC has committed to systematically consider gender and women's different needs and promote their active participation (European Commission 2008). It also acknowledges, however, that "it has supported specific projects on an ad hoc basis, without developing a gender policy" (European Commission 2008). The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid specifically highlights the importance of gender-sensitive approaches, and ECHO foresaw the creation of gender policy for humanitarian aid at the end of 2010, but it has not been published as of yet. ECHO conducted a *Review of Gender Issues Including Strategies Against Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Interventions* in 2009. Additionally, the European Commission stated, "DG ECHO will continue to work on a systematic framework for dealing with gender issues in general and sexual violence in particular. The issue will be mainstreamed in regional response strategies where necessary," (2010a, p.6).

## PILLAR 1

# RESPONDING TO NEEDS

ECHO has developed a Global Needs Assessment and Forgotten Crisis Assessment as tools to allocate funding. The Global Needs Assessment uses a vulnerability index to identify the most vulnerable countries and a crisis index to identify countries experiencing humanitarian crises (European Commission 2010b). Maintaining adequate funding especially for protracted crises is considered a key challenge in the *Mid-term Review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan* (European Commission (2010c). The EC expresses a firm commitment to humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, including for its civil protection forces (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007). ECHO also affirms that military forces should only be used as a last resort to maintain the neutrality and independence of humanitarian action (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007). With regards to the timeliness of funding, "ECHO uses 'primary emergency decision' which is a unique tool that allows the Commission to provide funds of up to €3 million almost immediately (a decision must be adopted within 72 hours of the event that provoked the crisis)," (Europa 2007, p.5).

## PILLAR 2

# PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

ECHO supports disaster risk reduction (DRR) through the creation of its Disaster Preparedness ECHO (DIPECHO) programme and the development of a related policy, the *EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries* 2009, which describes its intention to support community-based preparedness activities, mainstream DRR into humanitarian and development aid, engage in advocacy and provide funding for this purpose (Commission of the European Communities 2009). To address transitional activities, the EC uses the Instrument for Stability, which allows for a rapid financial response while linking short-term crisis response and long term development assistance (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007, p.10). The *Mid-term Review* states that participatory approaches increase local ownership, strengthen local capacity, and increase the effectiveness and appropriateness of humanitarian response (European Commission 2010c). This document also acknowledges that "there remains scope for consolidating collective EU efforts and strengthening individual donor commitment on some key challenges including a stronger commitment to promoting the role of local actors," (European Commission 2010c, pp. 5-6).

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## PILLAR 3

# WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

The EC underscores the need for flexible humanitarian funding. ECHO has a Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement with multiple UN agencies and Framework Partnership Agreements with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (European Commission 2011). The EC highlights its responsibility to coordinate on multiple fronts, and unique role in uniting European countries. The EC also affirms its support for OCHA and encourages “broad participation in and flexible use of ‘the Cluster Approach,’” (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007, p.6). Additionally, ECHO highlights its permanent field presence as a means of coordination (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007, pp.7-8).

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## PILLAR 4

# PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The EC considers international humanitarian law (IHL) a priority and provides funding to partner organisations with this mandate (European Commission 2010a). The EC expresses its concern for the decreasing respect for IHL, as it limits access to vulnerable populations and increases security risks for humanitarian workers (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007, p.1). In 2009, the European Commission published *Humanitarian Protection: DG ECHO's funding guidelines* regarding funding and monitoring protection-related humanitarian projects. Humanitarian aid and civil protection are the responsibility of the same Commission department and Commissioner but have separate strategy documents (European Commission 2010a, p.3). The *Mid-term Review* points to progress toward “ensuring full complementarity and maximum synergies between traditional humanitarian aid approaches and the use of civil protection expertise and assets,” (European Commission 2010c, p.4) and lists the advantages of civil protection resources, while stating the risk of compromising humanitarian principles through collaboration with civil protection forces. Access is a defining criterion in selecting implementing partners (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007, p.6). Refugee law is not specifically highlighted in ECHO's humanitarian policy, and human rights are only briefly addressed as a related policy field.

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## PILLAR 5

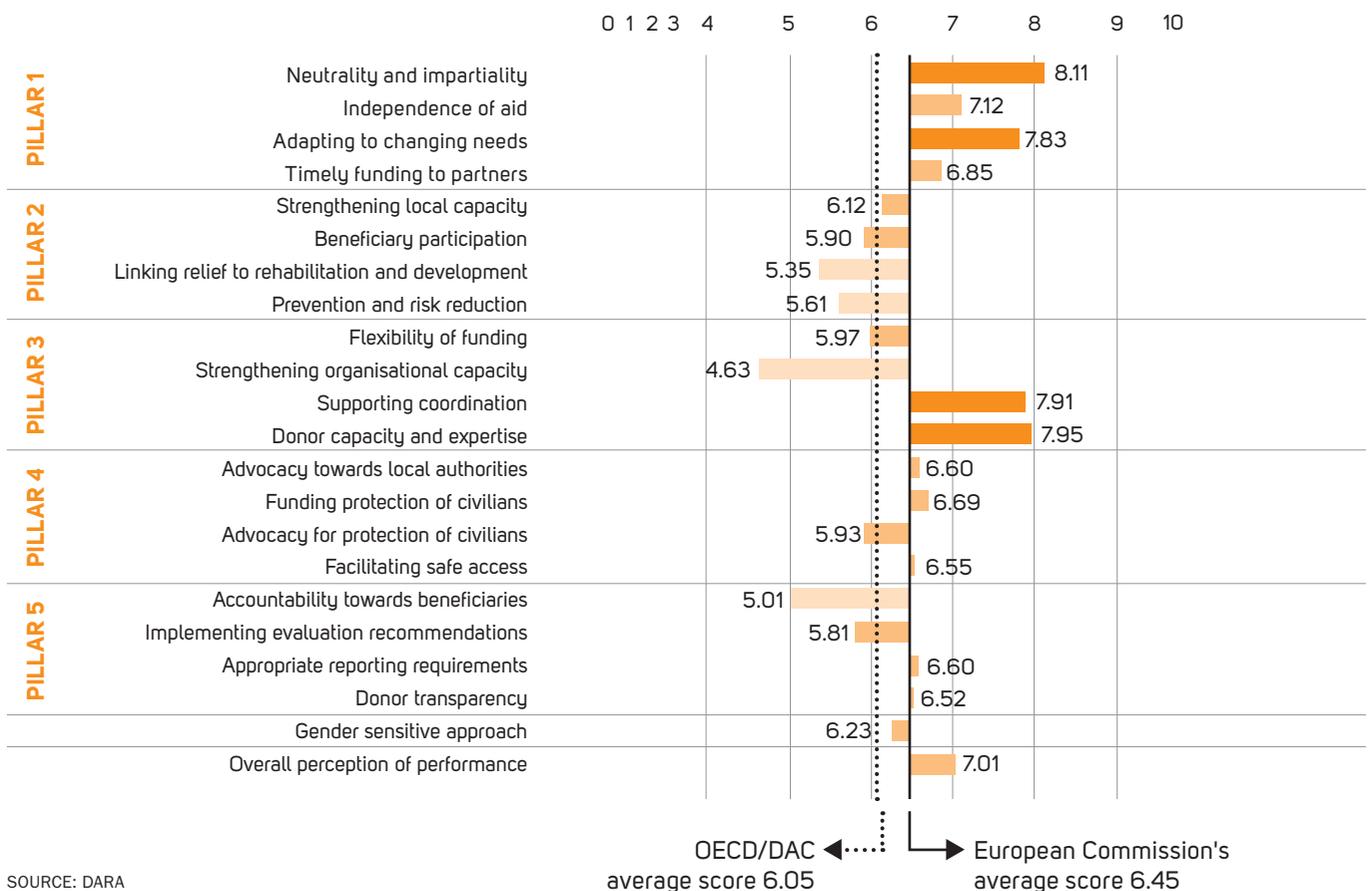
# LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The European Commission reports that it is required “to regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations,” (European Commission 2010d). ECHO conducts evaluations of its operations, as well as evaluations on a thematic basis and of its

partnerships. The European Commission states that “accountability and transparency vis a vis the... ultimate beneficiary is ensured by the process of setting priorities, providing humanitarian aid, reviewing and refocusing areas for funding as necessary, and ceasing activities when appropriate,” (2010a). Additionally, “accountability, including reporting transparently on results” is listed as a defining criterion for selecting implementing partners (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007, p.6). The *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid* states that humanitarian aid should be based on minimum standards of assistance and protection and that partners should adhere to the same standards (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007). Additionally, ECHO reaffirms its commitment to jointly assess the implementation of the *Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship* as well as *Good Humanitarian Partnership* (European Council, European Parliament and European Commission 2007, p.24).

# FIELD PARTNERS' PERCEPTIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES Collected questionnaires: 159



SOURCE: DARA

Colours represent performance compared to donor's average performance rating:

Good      Mid-range      Could improve

## HOW IS THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION PERCEIVED BY ITS PARTNERS?

### GENDER

EC/ECHO's efforts to ensure programmes integrate gender-sensitive approaches received mixed feedback from field partners. Some organisations seem to consider it a requirement on paper that is not taken as seriously as it should be. For example, one interview felt that it "is not an imperative demand from ECHO at all." Another noted that they "ask us for gender approaches in our proposals, but they never verify it. It's not a real gender policy, they just target women because of their vulnerability, like the handicapped, but it's not that important."

### PILLAR 1

### RESPONDING TO NEEDS

Similar to most donors, the European Commission's field partners gave high marks for its performance in Pillar 1. Field partners largely consider its humanitarian aid neutral, impartial and independent. One organisation stated, "ECHO is the least restrictive donor in contexts dealing with non-state actors, like in oPt and Somalia," a sentiment many others shared. Another expressed appreciation for EC/ECHO taking a stand to support humanitarian principles. Its partners are also highly positive regarding EC/ECHO's efforts to ensure the programmes it funds adapt to changing needs, although a few felt it could be "too interventionist" in internal decisions. Feedback was mostly positive regarding the timeliness of funding, although there were a few reports of delays: "ECHO funding is not on time. Even big NGOs are in trouble... up to four months delay in implementation."

### PILLAR 2

### PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Compared to other donors, the EC/ECHO performed well in the qualitative indicators that comprise Pillar 2. However, it encompasses some of the EC's lowest qualitative scores. Some of the EC/ECHO's field partners provided negative feedback of its support for transitional activities: "ECHO has a very big barrier between development and humanitarian," and "[they] don't adapt the response to actual needs now. It's time to assure transition to development." Feedback on beneficiary participation was mixed. On the one hand, some organisations praised EC/ECHO for ensuring beneficiary participation: "they [other donors] ask us for it but they never verify it. ECHO, however, is more demanding on beneficiary participation," and "with the exception of ECHO, no donor prioritizes beneficiary participation." Another organisation, however, observed that "ECHO's requirement on beneficiary participation is limited to the implementation stage," though partner organisations held differing opinions in this regard. Others reported greater interest in beneficiary participation in monitoring and evaluation.

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## PILLAR 3

# WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Partner organisations expressed appreciation for the EC/ECHO's capacity and expertise. "Their knowledge of the context is great," affirmed one interviewee. Another noted that EC/ECHO "comes and speaks with you... and provides you with knowledge from other contexts." In fact, EC/ECHO received the highest score of all donors for this, and also its second-highest qualitative score. Partners also praised EC/ECHO's support for coordination. One organisation indicated that EC/ECHO "tries to go beyond its limits" and participates in "weekly coordination meetings with all actors, information sharing and is involved in the field's mechanisms." Feedback was more critical regarding the flexibility of funding and support for organisational capacity in areas like preparedness, response and contingency planning: "ECHO does not support strengthening of organisational skills."

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## PILLAR 4

# PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Partners in the field were mostly positive regarding support for protection. One organisation observed that it has changed over time: "ECHO has evolved significantly the support they provide for protection of civilian activities. Originally they refused to fund protection activities and now they do." In comparison, partner feedback was less positive for its advocacy for protection – a trend common to many donors. Field partners generally gave high marks for EC/ECHO's efforts to obtain access: "they support the UN access team which is very useful for NGOs," although several disagreed. One interviewee considered that "ECHO could do more in terms of humanitarian space in buffer zone and Gaza restricted areas," and another added "ECHO does not support humanitarian access."

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## PILLAR 5

# LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

EC/ECHO received some of its lowest scores for *Accountability toward beneficiaries* and *Implementing evaluation recommendations*, although it outperformed other donors in these indicators. When asked about requirements for accountability toward beneficiaries, one interviewee asserted that "ECHO is more dynamic, has more imagination to include beneficiaries' voices in its programmes." In Somalia, however, one organisation reported that they "do not require accountability to beneficiaries. They just audit the funds but do not go beyond." Perceptions of the appropriateness of reporting requirements were mixed. Here, EC/ECHO scored below most donors on this indicator, yet close to the average of its qualitative scores. Most organisations agreed that EC/ECHO had highly meticulous reporting requirements. The disagreement lied in whether this level of rigor was appropriate. Some organisations complained of "onerous reporting requirements which lose sight of the core humanitarian mandate," while others considered that "ECHO could simplify the reporting requirements, but they are right in being so strict," and "if all donors were like ECHO, the system would work better, but we would need one person for reporting only."

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## ● IMPROVE FLEXIBILITY AND REPORTING

EC/ECHO is considered a strong donor with the best capacity and expertise of the OECD/DAC donors. However, feedback from partners and data in the quantitative indicators suggest that it could improve in the several administrative areas, such as flexibility of funding and reporting requirements. For example, EC/ECHO's partners rated it poorly for the flexibility of funding. The related quantitative indicators seem to confirm this, as EC/ECHO received the lowest score of the OECD/DAC donors for *Un-earmarked funding*, which measures the percentage of humanitarian funding provided without earmarking to ICRC, UNHCR, WFP, OHCHR, UNICEF, IFRC, OCHA and UNRWA. EC/ECHO provided 2.9% of its humanitarian funding without earmarking to these organisations in 2010, less than in 2009, when it gave 3.4% without earmarking and well below the OECD/DAC average of 33.2%. Furthermore, partners consider EC/ECHO's reporting requirements to be among the most rigorous. While they disagreed over whether or not this was appropriate, even those organisations that appreciated the meticulousness affirmed that at least one staff member was required to dedicate their time to comply with EC/ECHO's reporting requirements.

## ● ENSURE COHERENCE BETWEEN EC AND ECHO TO SUPPORT TRANSITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Some partners indicated difficulty linking relief to rehabilitation and development, though it appears to vary according to the crisis. EC/ECHO obtained its lowest scores for this in Somalia and Pakistan, where partners reported that transitional activities fell in a gap outside of ECHO's mandate, which did not facilitate a continuum of funding with the EC to ensure these activities were covered.

## ● EXPLORE OPTIONS TO EXPEDITE FUNDING DISBURSEMENT

EC/ECHO could improve the timeliness of its funding. It provided 53.5% of its funding within the first six weeks of sudden onset emergencies in 2010, while the OECD/DAC average was 80.5%. *Timely funding to sudden onset emergencies* was a former strength of the EC/ECHO in the 2009, but its funding for complex emergencies has been slower in 2010. The EC/ECHO provided 48.8% of its funding to complex emergencies within the first three months of a humanitarian appeal, making it the slowest of its group whose average is 64.0%.



Please see [www.daraint.org](http://www.daraint.org) for a complete list of references.