



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 28.9.2007
COM(2007) 555 final

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

**Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - (ECHO)
Annual Report 2006**

[SEC(2007) 1227]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	GENERAL POLICY ASPECTS	4
3.	GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF DG ECHO’S HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS IN 2006	5
3.1.	Main events and allocation of funds	5
3.2.	Main interventions in 2006, by region	7
3.3.	Comparative analysis	8
3.4.	Thematic funding	9
3.5.	Disaster preparedness activities (including DIPECHO)	9
3.6.	Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)	10
3.7.	Main partners in the humanitarian operations.....	10
4.	RELATIONS WITH OTHER EU INSTITUTIONS, MEMBER STATES, MAJOR HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS AND NON-EU DONORS	11
5.	OTHER ACTIVITIES.....	11
6.	CONCLUSION.....	12

Annex:

Detailed country-by-country overview of humanitarian operations, relations with partners, results of evaluations and financial tables and statistics [SEC(2007) 1227].

1. INTRODUCTION

DG ECHO is the service of the European Commission responsible for providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of conflicts or disasters, both natural and man-made, in third countries. Its mandate is to save and preserve life, reduce or prevent suffering and safeguard the integrity and dignity of **populations affected by humanitarian crises** as described in the Council Regulation N° 1257/96. DG ECHO supports humanitarian aid operations in line with internationally agreed **humanitarian principles** in a **neutral, impartial and non-discriminatory** manner, in respect of International Humanitarian Law ("IHL") and defends humanitarian space and principles which are increasingly under threat. For DG ECHO, the best way to preserve this humanitarian space is to maintain a high level of engagement in the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) principles, to remain committed to high quality assistance and to maintain a transparent dialogue with **other key players**.

The decisions and actions taken by the service are solely determined by the assessment of humanitarian needs and are not guided by or subject to political considerations other than the affirmation of the European Union's **solidarity** with people in need. The aid is intended to go directly to those in distress, irrespective of race, religion or political convictions

DG ECHO does not implement assistance programmes itself. It is a donor and implements its mission by funding Community humanitarian actions through **partners** which have signed the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) such as NGOs and International Organisations (Red Cross family) or the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) for the UN agencies (mainly UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP¹).

DG ECHO's task is to ensure that goods and services get to crisis zones fast through these partners. The rapidity of aid delivery is facilitated by special provisions in the Financial Regulation and their implementing measures which draws heavily on the concept of partnership that underpin the longer term relations. These structural arrangements also enable DG ECHO to deploy technical assistants (ECHO experts) in the field thereby ensuring the identification of vulnerable sections of society, an accurate assessment of needs, the rapid identification of suitable partners and projects to fulfil the needs, followed up by on-the-spot monitoring of partners and project's progress in order to have a sound financial management supporting reasonable assurance.

Its assistance also aims at facilitating, together with other aid instruments, the return of populations to self-sufficiency wherever and whenever possible, and to permit the phasing out of DG ECHO funding in good conditions. In that perspective, DG ECHO is actively engaged in implementing a **linkage strategy between relief, rehabilitation and development** "LRRD", and in developing stronger cooperation with other Commission services or other donors. Based on its experience in addressing disasters, DG ECHO also works at **promoting disaster preparedness** in order to reduce both vulnerability and exposure of people to risks and disasters as well as to reduce the economic costs of such disasters. Finally, with a view to

¹ United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations World Food Program

the effective discharge of its mandate, DG ECHO may support – where appropriate and necessary – **capacity building** measures of its implementing partners.

This report sums up DG ECHO's main activities in 2006. The annex provides the detail of DG ECHO activities in 2006, including a country-by-country overview of humanitarian operations and statistics.

2. GENERAL POLICY ASPECTS

In general, over the last few decades, the **strength and number of natural disasters have increased**, as well as the number of people affected, the poorest people being affected disproportionately. According to forecasts, this tendency is likely to increase in the future.

In parallel, the number of **conflicts** has not changed significantly but the current conflicts tend to **last longer** and are increasingly destructive despite the number of refugees falling in recent years. The number of displaced persons in their own country is stable but still stands at more than 25 million².

On the policy level, DG ECHO has taken several initiatives to cater for the fact that the international context in which humanitarian aid takes place is changing significantly, not only in terms of nature, frequency and intensity of disasters but also in terms of the geopolitical context in which it operates. **New actors have appeared on the scene** such as non-traditional donors, including actors from the corporate sector or states that have not hitherto been active in humanitarian aid. Similarly, Member States' civil protection teams and military have come to play a significant role in some circumstances and need to be taken into account in many humanitarian operations. While much of this policy terrain is covered by the "*Good Humanitarian Donorship*" initiative, this initiative has never been endorsed at EU level. In order to anticipate and adapt to this changing environment, DG ECHO is working on ways to further improve co-operation with civil protection mechanisms and with Civil Military Co-operation. The Commissioner in charge of humanitarian aid tasked DG ECHO to launch a major political initiative and by way of a **communication** from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament setting out the **EU consensus** on the principles and best practices of humanitarian action with a view to strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of EU policies in this domain.

In order to improve the Commission's response to disasters and within the framework of the EU strategy to strengthen its response to disasters and to crises in third countries (COM (2005)153), DG ECHO has proposed to **increase** the number of its **experts on the ground**, including those trained and having experience in the rapid evaluation of needs and being able to be deployed quickly in the event of a disaster. This, together with further **strengthening** of DG ECHO's **operational and contractual procedures** has increased the capacity and improved the response time of delivering humanitarian aid through DG ECHO's implementing partners which include NGOs, International Organisations and UN organisations. This allows the service to provide a significant contribution to the further development of the EU's capacity for dealing with crisis and disaster, which is increasingly

² www.reliefweb.int

becoming a political priority following the post-Tsunami communications, the Barnier report and related documents.

The year 2006 is the end of the last **Financial Perspectives** covering 2000-2006. Under these perspectives, the budget for humanitarian aid was kept at a quite stable and minimal amount, starting at a level of EUR 471 million in 2000 and ending with EUR 496 million in 2006. This minimal amount implied that DG ECHO had to seek reinforcement every year, mainly through use of the Emergency Aid Reserve which is first and foremost for humanitarian aid.

Under the new Financial Perspectives, covering the years 2007-2013, all activities of a humanitarian nature will be integrated in a single instrument. Due to the integration of food aid and aid to uprooted people the humanitarian aid budget for the year 2007 will be at EUR 732 million (against a comparable figure in 2006 of EUR 710 million) with a yearly indicative increase of 3%.

3. GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF DG ECHO'S HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS IN 2006

3.1. Main events and allocation of funds

In the field of humanitarian aid, 2006 proved to be particularly challenging with the Lebanon crisis as well as a series of major natural disasters in addition to the ongoing burden of humanitarian crises.

The year began with a series of droughts in Horn of Africa, Southern Africa and in Afghanistan, the spill over from the 2005 nutritional crisis in Niger and the earthquake in Java (Indonesia) on 27 May leaving more than one million homeless people. The Commission equally had to deal with the worsening humanitarian situation in Sudan, the aggravation of crisis in West Bank and Gaza and persistent humanitarian needs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chechnya and Colombia to name but a few of the most dramatic humanitarian situations. The short but highly complex Lebanon crisis in July/August 2006 required a multi-faceted response by the European Commission in which the rapid delivery of humanitarian aid played a major role.

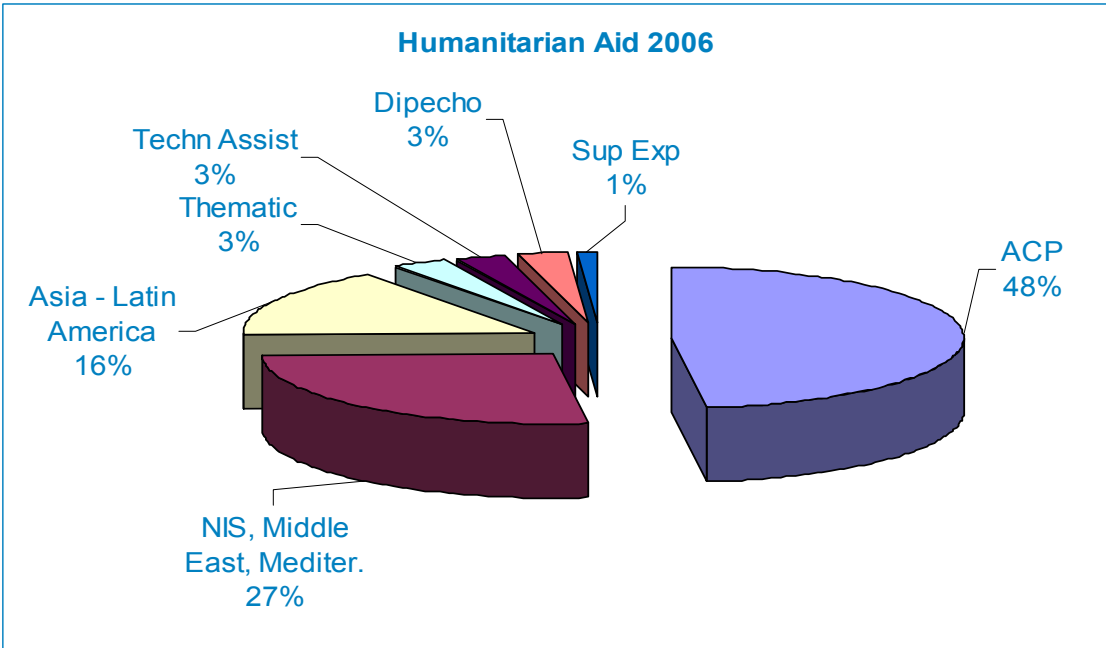
The worsening humanitarian situation led DG ECHO to call upon the Commission's Emergency Aid Reserve three times in 2006, for Sudan (Darfur), for Lebanon and for West Bank and Gaza for a total of EUR 140 million³. These events had a significant impact on DG ECHO, having to manage a total budget of EUR 671 million compared to the budget initially set at EUR 496 million (rounded figures).

DG ECHO's response to humanitarian crises in 2006 was channelled through 90 funding decisions. The implementation of the commitment appropriations was 100%. ACP countries were the biggest recipients of aid (EUR 322 million – 48%), followed by Eastern Europe, New Independent States, Middle East and Mediterranean countries (EUR 177.9 million – 27%) and Asia and Latin America (EUR 105.5 million – 16%).

³ Beside the transfer from the Emergency Aid Reserve (EUR 140 million) further budget reinforcements came from the use of EDF resources (EUR 28 million) and re-assigned revenue (EUR 7 million).

The table below gives an overview of the geographical distribution of the humanitarian aid decisions adopted in 2006 (amounts in million euros):

Unit/Region	Amounts	%
A/1: Africa, Caribbean, Pacific	322.060.000	48%
Horn of Africa	161.050.000	
Great Lakes	84.050.000	
West Africa	56.150.000	
Caribbean and Pacific	1.610.000	
Southern Africa	19.200.000	
A/2: Eastern Europe, New Independent States, Middle East, Mediterranean	177.900.000	27%
NIS (Chechnya, Caucasus, Tajikistan, ...)	33.000.000	
Middle East	134.000.000	
Mediterranean countries	10.900.000	
A/3: Asia, Latin America	105.491.305	16%
Asia	86.891.305	
Latin America	18.600.000	
0/1: Thematic funding + grants	20.500.000	3%
Technical Assistance (experts & Imprest Accounts)	19.000.000	3%
Dipecho - Disaster Preparedness	19.050.000	3%
Support Expenditure & use of re-assigned revenue	7.005.627	1%
TOTAL 2006	671.006.932	100%



DG ECHO's response to humanitarian emergencies evolved in line with the changes in global humanitarian needs in 2006, as reflected in the regional distribution of the DG's funding patterns, with a particular focus on the "forgotten crises". To ensure that DG ECHO's operations are driven by needs, DG ECHO's work programme is based on a global needs assessment (GNA) methodology. This provides a general cross-country assessment comparing the situation across more than 140 developing countries, on the basis of indicators (human development, human poverty, natural disaster risk, conflicts, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), under-five malnutrition and mortality and other donors' contributions). This methodology has been refined in 2006 with the splitting of the GNA in two indexes; a vulnerability index and a crisis index.

DG ECHO's aid strategy continued to focus on **forgotten crises**. This relates to situations where major humanitarian needs receive little attention on the part of donors - reflected by the level of aid received - and the media. DG ECHO's analysis and methodology for identifying forgotten crises is based on both quantitative data (lack of media coverage or low donor support combined with high needs) and qualitative factors (field assessment by DG ECHO experts and desk officers). The forgotten crises identified in 2006 were: Chechnya, Myanmar, Sahrawi refugees (Algeria), Nepal and in a lesser degree, India for the crisis in Kashmir. In the course of the year support amounting to EUR 65.7 million was allocated to these crises, which represents 14% of the EUR 489.5 million total committed from Chapter 23 02 of the budget and the EDF.

The results of GNA and FCA assessments can be found on the Europa website http://ec.europa.eu/comm/echo/information/strategy/index_en.htm.

3.2. Main interventions in 2006, by region⁴

Details of these interventions are available in annex – section I.

3.2.1. *Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP countries)*

In 2006, DG ECHO allocated EUR 322 million to ACP countries. The most important actions took place in:

- In **Sudan**, due to the worsening situation in Darfur, the budget allocation rose from EUR 40 to EUR 97 million and another EUR 17 million were allocated to Chad to respond to the consequences of Sudanese population movements;
- Northern **Uganda** is suffering its twentieth year of armed conflict. The Government is fighting against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern districts. The budget allocated in 2006 of EUR 19 million was dedicated to provide water and sanitation, health and nutrition, livelihoods and food security, protection and non-food items;
- In **Burundi**: EUR 17 million was used in favour of vulnerable people, providing essential medicines to health centres and public hospitals. Within the fight against cholera, people were provided with potable water and specialised treatment centres and hygiene education. Finally, people also benefited from protection activities;

⁴ The main interventions are based on the highest allocation amounts of each region

- In **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, the total funding of EUR 50 million was used to meet the basic health, nutrition and shelter needs of the most vulnerable populations in the most deprived area (eastern regions) and for providing humanitarian air transport capacity;
- In **Liberia**, a budget of EUR 19.8 million was used to continue assisting the return and reinstallation of refugees and internally displaced people to their place of origin, with funding of relief packages, transport and general assistance including protection.

3.2.2. *Mediterranean and Middle-East*

The escalation of tension in the **Occupied Palestinian Territories** and the humanitarian needs of their most vulnerable populations and of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria required an increase in the initial budget allocation, from EUR 34 to 84 million to respond to their increased needs in the following sectors: food, health, water and sanitation, emergency employment and protection.

Moreover, the one-month war between Israel and Hezbollah resulted in deaths, injuries and displacement of people in **Lebanon**, to which DG ECHO responded by mobilising EUR 50 million of funding for emergency medical care, emergency food and non-food relief, water and sanitation and temporary shelters. Following the cessation of hostilities, DG ECHO focused on remaining emergency needs and small scale rehabilitation.

3.2.3. *Asia*

In 2006, DG ECHO mobilised EUR 15.7 million to provide continuing assisting to Burmese refugees along the **Thai-Burma** border and to the most vulnerable groups affected by the long-lasting crisis in Burma; funds were allocated to improve the protection for the stateless Muslim population in the North of Burma.

A budget of EUR 22.5 million was allocated to sustain the reintegration process of returnees, IDPs and vulnerable groups affected by the conflict and drought in Afghanistan and to protect and support Afghan refugees in **Pakistan** and **Iran**.

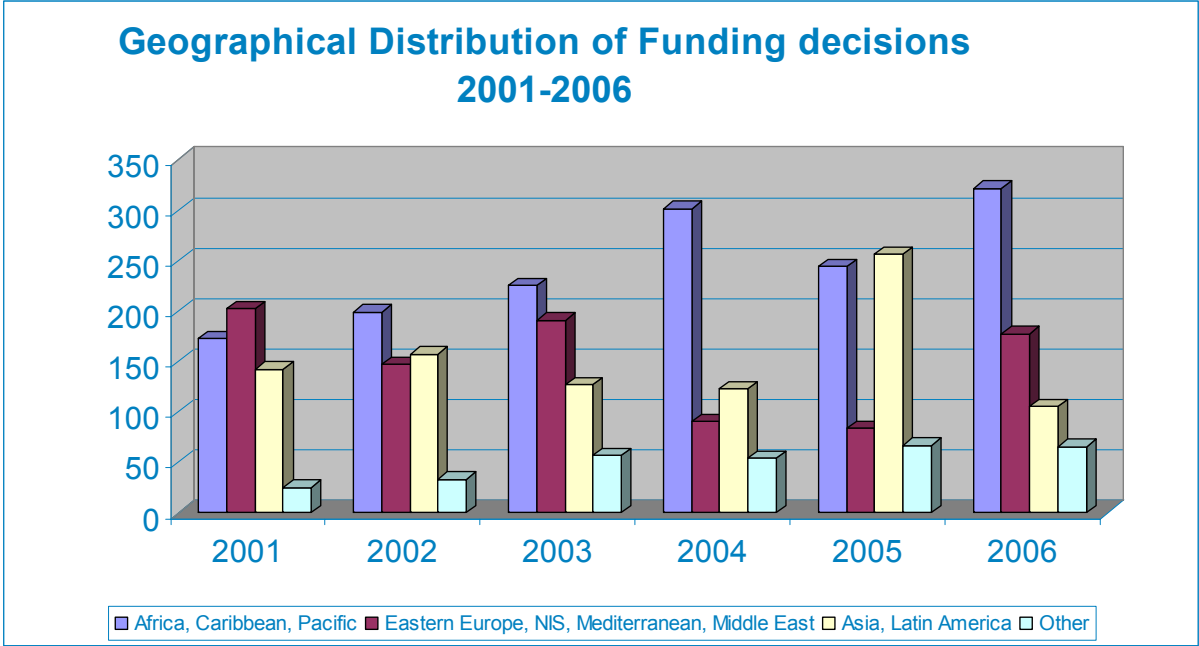
3.2.4. *Latin America*

The main intervention took place in **Colombia** where EUR 12 million was allocated to people affected by the long lasting conflict. The first objective of DG ECHO's intervention was to provide assistance in water and sanitation, shelters, food aid, education, etc. with a focus on protection to reinforce the fragile Colombian protective environment.

3.3. **Comparative analysis**

The **comparative analysis in the chart below of the geographical distribution of funding decisions for the years 2001-2006** shows that whereas in previous years the relative share of the funding to the ACP countries was continuously increasing, this trend was reversed in 2005 whereby the lion's share of funding was for Asia for the two main crisis in that part of the world: Tsunami and earthquake in Kashmir. In 2006, the share of the funding to the ACP countries took back the first place with about half of the budget. If one looks at a five years perspective it should also be pointed out that the funding for the various regions and parts of the world is very variable, which confirms that DG ECHO intervention is short-term oriented.

It should also be noted that over 96% of the humanitarian aid budget is for funding humanitarian operations, whereas less than 4% is for support expenditure (information, audits, evaluations, etc.).



3.4. Thematic funding

Given the central role played by the main international organisations with a humanitarian mandate (UN relevant agencies, ICRC, IFRC, ...) in the effective delivery of humanitarian aid, DG ECHO continued in 2006 to support the reinforcement of their institutional capacities through thematic funding programmes.

In 2006, DG ECHO supported programmes from UNOCHA (information management), UNHCR (refugee registration), UNICEF (child protection and emergency response) and WFP for needs assessment. Programmes were ongoing with WHO (Health Action in Crisis) and IFRC (disaster management and emergency response). Finally ICRC was financed for programmatic protection activities.

3.5. Disaster preparedness activities (including DIPECHO)

In line with Council Regulation 1257/96, DG ECHO alongside its humanitarian relief promotes disaster preparedness through advocacy, coordination and the specific DIPECHO programme. The consequences of hazards as well as the more open recognition of global climate change and its impact show that this engagement is very relevant and needed.

On a strategic level, DG ECHO has in 2006 reinforced its institutional resources on disaster preparedness that are expected to facilitate a more coherent and comprehensive approach to mainstreaming disaster preparedness in humanitarian relief and rehabilitation programmes. This is fully in line with the global attention to disaster risk reduction activities among humanitarian and development donors and the foreseen follow-up to the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015*.

In 2006, DG ECHO continued its engagement in advocacy activities aimed at ensuring that development donors include disaster risk reduction components in their work in regions at risk of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones, etc, and to support practical measures to reduce these risks. DG ECHO is also a strong advocate for community-based approaches to disaster risk reduction that increase the coping capacity of vulnerable communities.

Developing countries are especially at risk from hazards due to significant weaknesses in the national response capacity and the capability of local communities to cope with the unfavourable consequences of such a catastrophe. DIPECHO projects are community-based disaster preparedness projects which focus on communities which are most exposed to natural disasters and have low coping capacity. The projects have a demonstrative and replicable purpose aiming at being integrated into long-term development and national strategies. As well as country-based operations, DIPECHO Action Plans contain regional projects since natural disasters are not confined to state boundaries. In 2006, DG ECHO committed a total of EUR 19.05 million for DIPECHO Action Plans in Central America, Central Asia and South East Asia.

As a new development in 2006, DG ECHO adopted a significant regional decision (EUR 10 million) on disaster preparedness for pastoralist populations to better prepare for drought, a slow-onset disaster, in the Greater Horn of Africa (Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Eritrea). This programme has been developed in close cooperation with DG Development and EuropeAid Cooperation Office.

3.6. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)

DG ECHO is committed to develop proper exit transition and strategies for humanitarian assistance (the **linkage between relief, rehabilitation and development “LRRD”**). DG ECHO has been participating actively in the newly re-launched inter-service group on LRRD in which DG for External Relations, DG Development and EuropeAid Co-operation Office are also involved. The entry in force in 2007 of the new external instruments (DCI, stability instruments in particular) will present a new environment for the implementation of LRRD that ECHO started to prepare, with the other services concerned, in 2006. A specific attention has been devoted to the transition between food aid and food security, with the transfer to DG ECHO of the entire emergency food aid budget. DG ECHO decided to nominate five countries as pilots to enhance already ongoing or challenging LRRD policies: these countries were Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Sudan and Uganda. In most, but not in all, of the countries concerned by year end, significant results were achieved. This was helped by the planning process for the 10th EDF. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen this even further.

3.7. Main partners in the humanitarian operations

The humanitarian aid provided by DG ECHO is implemented through partners. DG ECHO works with about 200 non-governmental organisations, United Nations agencies and International Organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies.

Having a diverse range of partners is important for DG ECHO. It allows the efficient coverage of an increasing list of needs all over the world. DG ECHO has developed close

working relationships with its partners at the level of both policy issues and management of humanitarian operations.

In 2006, DG ECHO implemented its operations mainly through NGOs (52%), United Nations agencies (37%) and International organisations (11%). For more details on the yearly repartition between families of partners, see annex sections V.6 and V.7.

4. RELATIONS WITH OTHER EU INSTITUTIONS, MEMBER STATES, MAJOR HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS AND NON-EU DONORS

As in previous years, DG ECHO pursued an active relationship with other Institutions, Member States, International Organisations and other relevant actors such as major non-EU donors in order to promote humanitarian principles and values.

At the end of 2006, DG ECHO launched an extensive consultation process of the EC's humanitarian partners and Member States on key humanitarian issues such as the aim, principles and values on which humanitarian aid is based, the challenges faced by humanitarian actors and the implementation of humanitarian aid.

The result of this consultation will feed into the preparation of a Commission Communication which will seek an EU consensus on the principles and best practice of humanitarian action and to set out an agenda for implementing a more closely co-ordinated approach, so that the European Union maximises its contribution to the collective international humanitarian response. The European Consensus should pursue scope for a more coherent, consistent and comprehensive approach to humanitarian aid.

More details on these partners are given in annex – section II.

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES

In the context of its activities, DG ECHO has also to deal with other tasks to support the delivery and quality of Humanitarian Aid:

- (1) Development of DG ECHO's **security and safety** policy for staff involved in the delivery of humanitarian aid;
- (2) Strengthening of its **rapid response capacity** in the field by organising multi-sectoral teams;
- (3) **Communication strategy and information**
- (4) On training initiative, DG ECHO supports the **Network on Humanitarian Assistance** (NOHA) which offers a multi-disciplinary post-graduate diploma.

Details of these activities are given in Annex – section III.

The proper implementation of DG ECHO-funded operations is ensured through several layers of checks and controls at various stages of the project cycle of humanitarian operations. These

aspects of the control strategy developed by DG ECHO, its supervision and monitoring procedures are described in Annex – section IV.

6. CONCLUSION

2006 proved to be a particularly challenging year for DG ECHO with the Lebanon crisis as well as a series of major natural disasters and the ongoing burden of humanitarian crises. DG ECHO has been nevertheless able to fulfil its role in accordance with its mandate. For the main policy objective to ensure an efficient delivery of humanitarian aid, the targets have been reached and substantially exceeded.