



# **COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S HUMANITARIAN AID, 2012-2016**

## **RESULTS OF THE OPEN PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **Purpose and scope of the open public consultation**

As part of the evaluation of the Commission's humanitarian aid activities during the 2012-2016 period, an open public consultation (OPC) was launched to collect the views of humanitarian aid stakeholders and the general public on the performance of the Commission between 2012 and 2016.

The OPC respondents were given the opportunity to provide their own assessment of the relevance, coherence, EU added value, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Commission's humanitarian aid activities. Secondly, the OPC respondents were invited to share their views on the upcoming challenges for the Commission in the humanitarian aid field, and on how the Commission can best fulfil its humanitarian aid commitments in light of such challenges.

The results of this OPC are to feed into the evaluation aimed at shaping the future orientations of the Commission's approach to humanitarian aid.

### **2. Overview of responses to the open public consultation**

#### **Number and distribution of replies received**

There were 38 respondents to the open public consultation on the EU's Humanitarian Aid 2012-2016. Of the 38 survey respondents, 30 responded on behalf of an organisation (79%) and 8 as private citizens (21%).

Among the 30 responding organisations, there were:

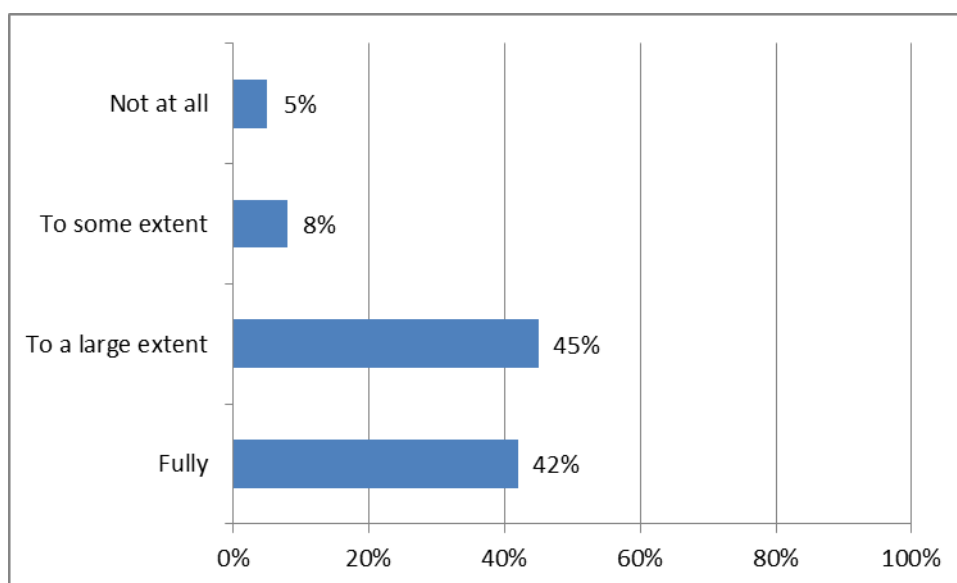
- 23 NGOs
- 3 government agencies (from FR, NL and UK)
- 2 UN agencies (FAO and UNOCHA)
- 2 Red Cross branches

In addition nine position papers were submitted as part of the OPC.

### **Distribution by level of familiarity with the Commission humanitarian aid activities**

Nearly all of the respondents declared having knowledge DG ECHO humanitarian aid activities, with 87% declared being largely or very familiar with them.

*Figure A1.1 To what extent are you familiar with DG ECHO humanitarian aid activities*



*N=38*

### **3. Analysis of the survey responses**

This section covers the analysis of responses to questions relating to:

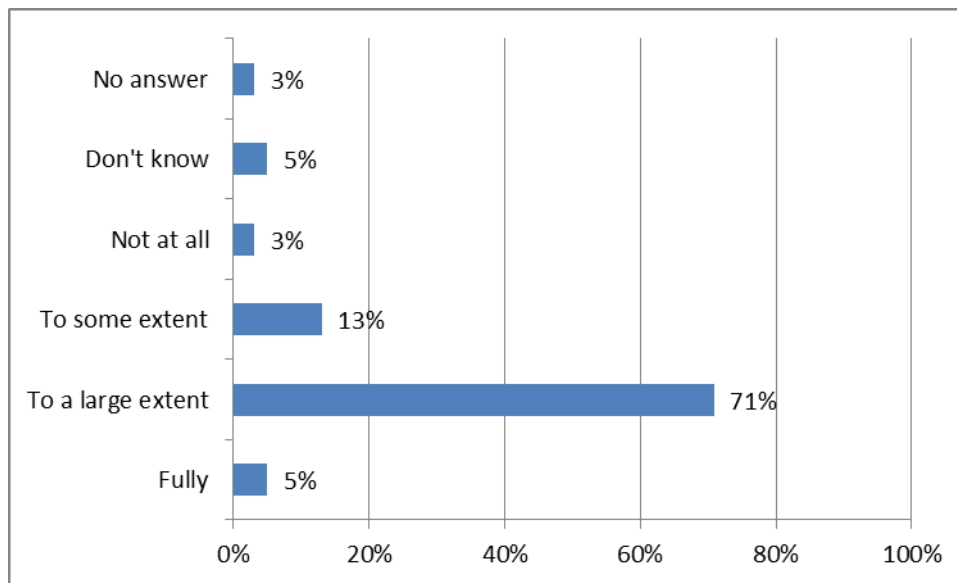
- The Commission's performance from 2012 until end-2016
- The follow-up to the Commission's international commitments and global humanitarian challenges

#### **The Commission's performance 2012-2016**

The survey questions about the Commission's performance between 2012 and the end of 2016 relate to the following evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, EU added value, effectiveness, sustainability and visibility.

## Relevance

Figure A1.2 To what extent are DG ECHO's budget allocations based on the consideration of the most pressing humanitarian needs?



N=38

Overall, 71% of the responding stakeholders believed that the Commission's budget allocations are based to a large extent on the most pressing humanitarian needs. The same view was shared by the Red Cross and UN respondents, half of the responding citizens, and two out of the three responding national authorities. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs held the view that the Commission's budget allocations are fully based on the consideration of the most pressing humanitarian needs.

However, several stakeholders expressed the view that there had been a recent shift in the prioritisation of the Commission's budgetary allocations to crises closer to the EU (e.g. Turkey and Syria) strongly linked to the EU's geopolitical agenda to the detriment of other protracted humanitarian crises, for instance in Nepal or Sudan<sup>1</sup>.

### *Extent to which ECHO's budget allocations were based on the most pressing needs*

Five position papers submitted by the UN, Red Cross EU Office, CARE, VOICE and Trocaire had additional comments on the extent to which ECHO's budget allocations were based on needs. All five position papers agreed that ECHO was making efforts to ensure a needs-based approach to humanitarian needs, and more so than other donors (VOICE). In fact, two of them (VOICE and CARE) highlighted the importance and added value of ECHO's focus on the needs and forgotten crisis, which was considered a comparative advantage of ECHO and something to be kept. VOICE also praised the regular improvements of ECHO's needs assessment instruments.

However, the funding available was not always seen as commensurate to the needs on the ground. ICRC highlighted an issue concerning the variation of funding available, referring to discrepancies of the allocations versus the number of people in need.

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<sup>1</sup> OPC Question: Please elaborate on your rating relating to relevance

All five papers also highlighted an opinion, that a coherent humanitarian funding allocation was hindered by political priorities (e.g., migration). CARE in particular expressed an opinion that in the past two years, increasingly politicised decisions had been observed in ECHO concerning funding to Syria, Greece and Turkey. A similar change in 2017 was observed also by Trocaire. Serious concerns regarding the EU’s humanitarian aid shifting from a global needs-based approach towards a neighbourhood focus was also raised by VOICE.

Three position papers (UN, CARE, VOICE) recommended to maintain a balance of ECHO’s funding allocations and keep it global, equally taking into account the needs of all geographies – Europe, Europe’s neighbourhood, Africa, Asia and Americas. Two papers specifically called ECHO to remain principled and needs based in budget allocation. VOICE also called EU to ensure respect for the distinct mandate and priorities of ECHO. Greater transparency in humanitarian decision-making, in particular towards implementing agencies, was seen to be an important part of the solution.

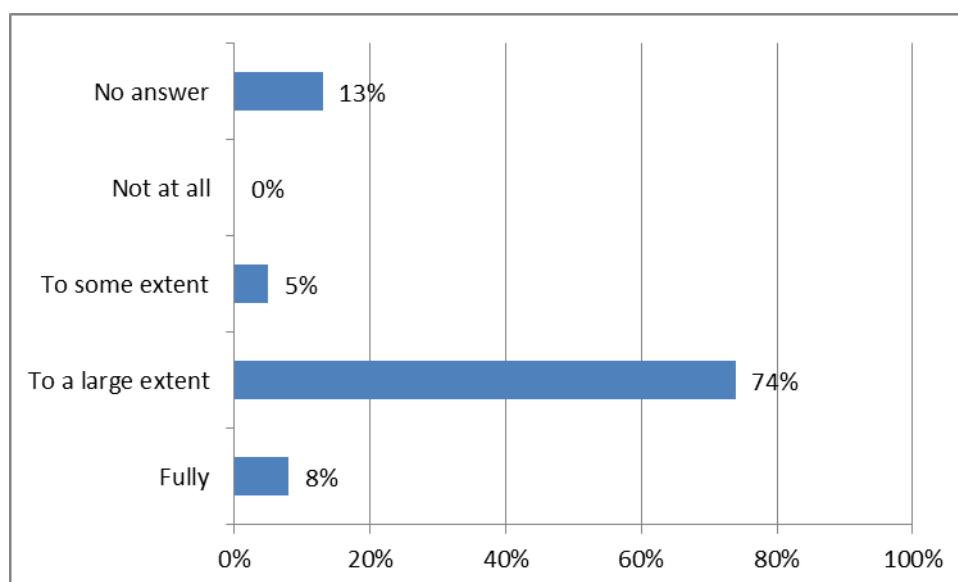
One position paper (CARE) also recommended ECHO to refocus its attention to forgotten crises, and base its funding decisions on objective needs-based criteria.

The EU and ECHO’s efforts to strive towards a more coordinated analysis and joint needs assessment were recognised and supported in one position paper (CARE). However, concerns were raised over potential risks around “groupthink” and political manipulation of needs analyses. The paper called ECHO to ensure that the connection between identification of the most vulnerable and the programming and independence of humanitarian aid agencies was respected.

## Coherence

### *Coherence with the four humanitarian principles*

Figure A1.3 To what extent are DG ECHO’s funded actions consistent with the four humanitarian principles (humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence) in their design and implementation?



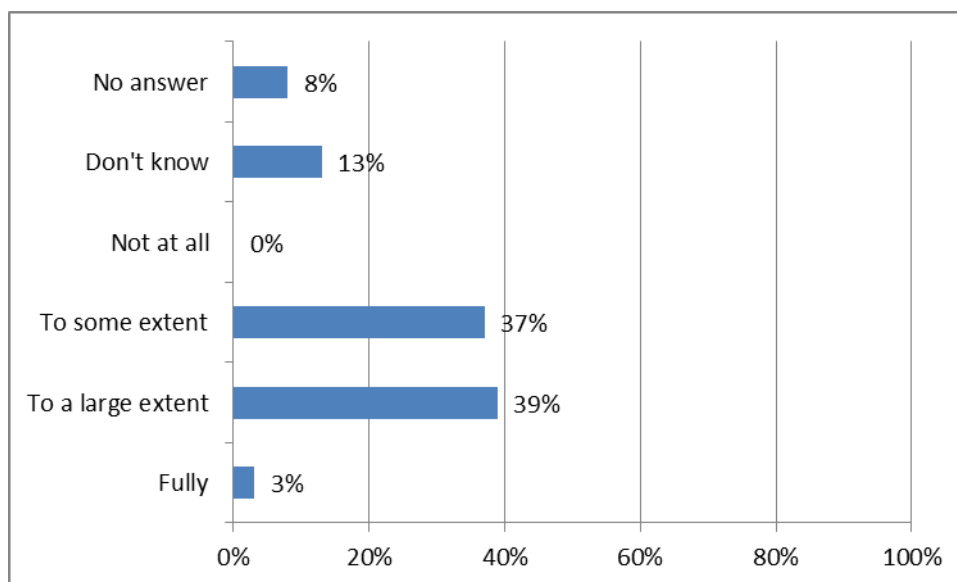
N=38

Overall, 74% of the responding stakeholders considered that the EU's funded actions were to a large extent consistent with the four key humanitarian principles in their design and implementation. The three responding national authorities shared the same view as well as half of the responding citizens, one UN respondent (the other UN respondent did not provide an answer) and one Red Cross respondent while the other Red Cross respondent believed that EU-funded actions are fully consistent with key humanitarian principles.

Of the nine submitted position papers, five acknowledge ECHO's consistency with the humanitarian principles. All agree to say that ECHO is known for attaching importance to International Humanitarian Laws (IHL) including the four principles of Humanity, Independence, Neutrality and Impartiality. As CARE mentions, ECHO's commitment to IHL, humanitarian principles and needs-based decision making is recognised by both donors and partners. However, all the position papers also expressed the view that if the humanitarian principles are well embedded in ECHO's humanitarian action, there is an increasing perception that ECHO is currently shifting towards a more politicised approach. As stated by the UN agencies, the increase in funding allocated to the EU neighbourhood in reaction to the migration flows, created an imbalance with respect to other regions which have seen their budget support decreasing. Trocaire pointed out it's concern about the increased politicisation of humanitarian aid for 2017 and the years to come. Hence, both CARE and Voice advise that these humanitarian principles remain at the heart of the EU's humanitarian action. ECHO should cherish and maintain these values that are well established. The Red Cross adds that the principle should be constantly reaffirmed to avoid the instrumentalisation of the humanitarian assistance for political purposes.

### ***Coherence with the Member States***

*Figure A1.4 To what extent are DG ECHO's funded actions coherent and complementary with those of Member States?*



N=38

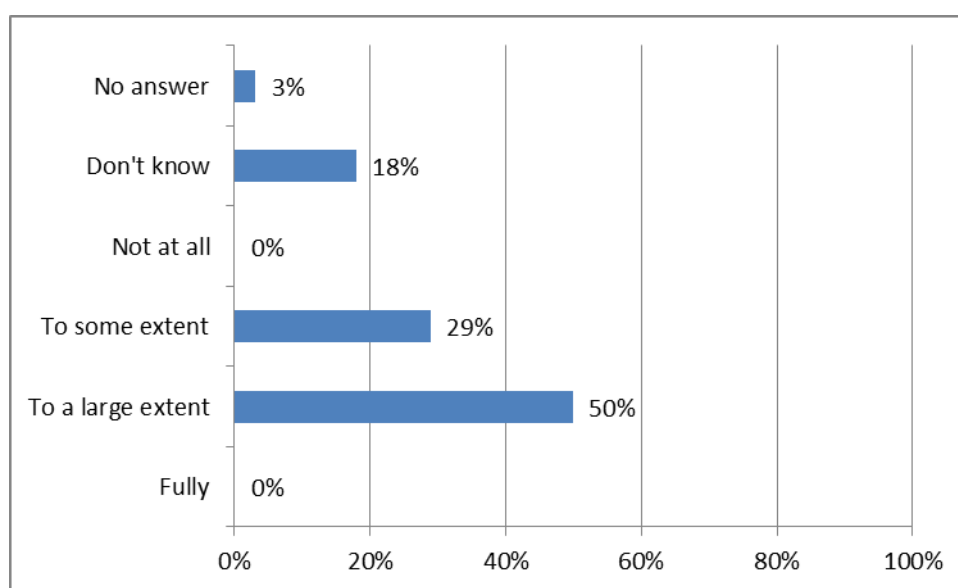
While being positive overall, the overall results reflect a split among stakeholders' views as to whether the Commission actions are to some extent or to a large extent coherent and complementary with those of Member States. Among the three responding national authorities, the United Kingdom's DFID indicated that ECHO actions are to some extent

coherent and complementary with those of Member States while the Foreign Affairs Ministries of France and the Netherlands indicated that this was to a large extent the case. One respondent on behalf of the Red Cross indicated that DG ECHO's actions were fully complementary and coherent with those of Member States. Private citizens were more likely to indicate that ECHO actions are only to some extent coherent and complementary with those of Member States.

From the nine position papers, only the UN agencies mentioned the lack of information exchanges between EU services and the Member States who are working separately. The other stakeholders have not made any comments on ECHO's consistency with member states' humanitarian aid actions. However, four have added comments on ECHO's consistency with other international donors.

### ***Coherence with other international donors***

*Figure A1.5 To what extent are DG ECHO's funded actions coherent and complementary with those of other international donors?*



*N=38*

Half of the respondents overall believed that the Commission actions are to a large extent complementary with those of other international donors. Both UN respondents taking part in this survey shared the same view. No respondents indicated that the Commission actions were fully or not at all coherent and complementary with those of other international donors.

The respondents were asked to explain how they saw the Commission actions as complementing and being coherent with those of other stakeholders and donors and what could be improved in this regard<sup>2</sup>. Overall, several NGOs appreciate the fact that the policy link between humanitarian aid and development is a lot more coherent today, with progress made in Resilience and Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) since 2012. On the other hand, it was pointed out that procedures for

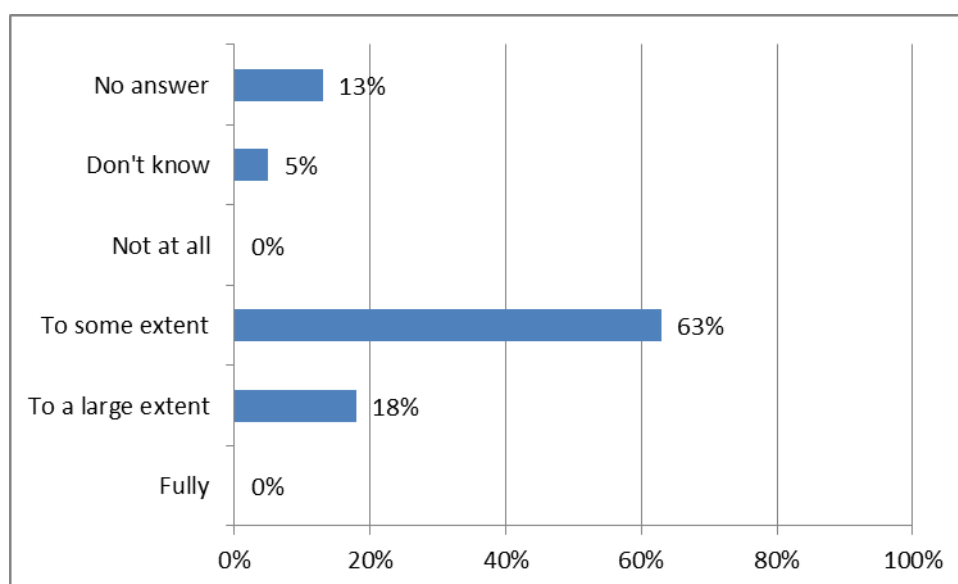
<sup>2</sup> OPC Question: With reference to the above questions on coherence, please elaborate on your rating, including a suggestion (if applicable) for other possible themes for collaboration with other actors and stakeholders

cooperation and coordination between humanitarian assistance and development donors and stakeholders could be further improved and streamlined.

The general views expressed through the position papers suggest that ECHO could do more to ensure consistency with other humanitarian donors. Four partners suggested that ECHO should agree on common strategies with other donors. The UN agencies took as an example the lack of coordination and joint approach at the field level on forced displacement issues between ECHO, DEVCO and the EU delegations. Lumos, for its part, recommends ECHO to forge stronger links with other humanitarian donors in the sector of child protection and child support in emergencies. VOICE even called on ECHO to play a leading role in encouraging more synergies among workstreams, in order to avoid contradictory approaches and duplication. However, , the Red Cross remains more cautious, stating that more joined up analysis and programming has the potential to put humanitarian action at risk. Their concern is that a more integrated approach with non-humanitarian actors could undermine the humanitarian principles, because of their differences in mandates, purposes and values.

### ***Coherence with other EU services and financial instruments***

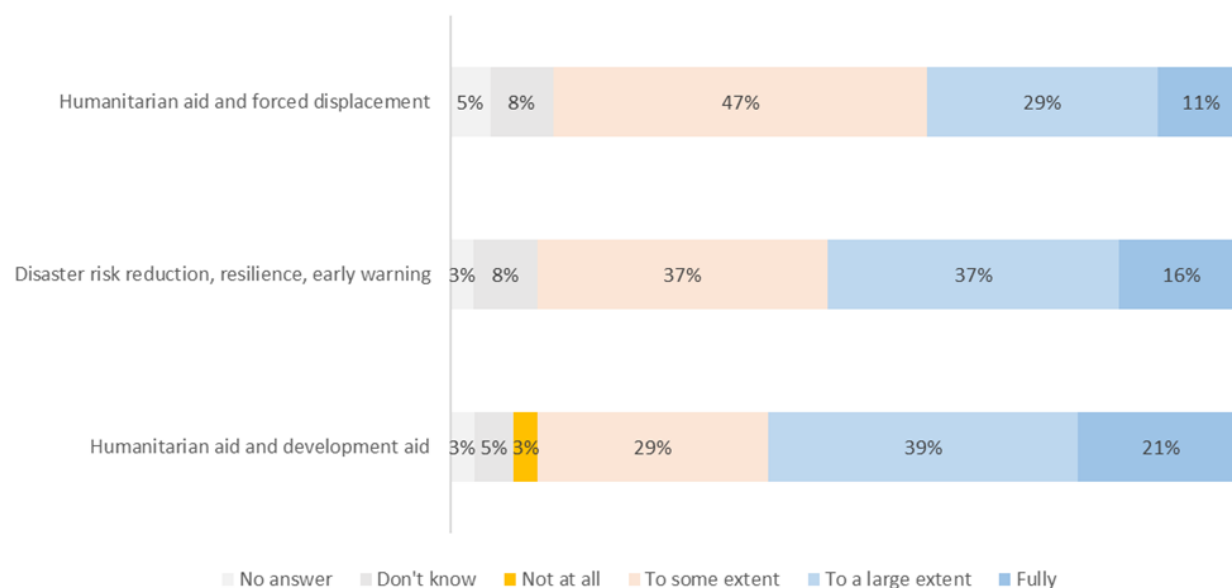
*Figure A1.6 To what extent are DG ECHO's humanitarian aid policies and funded actions coherent and complementary with the policies and actions of other parts of the European Commission, such as DG DEVCO and DG NEAR?*



*N=38*

While being positive overall, the results show that the majority of respondents believe that the Commission's humanitarian policies are only to some extent coherent and complementary with other EU Commission policies (e.g. DG DEVCO and DG NEAR). Two out of the three responding national authorities (NL, UK) however indicated that there was complementarity and coherence between the Commission policies and other EU Commission policies to a large extent. None of the respondents indicated that the Commission's humanitarian policies were fully or not at all coherent and complementary with policies from other Commission services.

Figure A1.7 Please assess the extent to which DG ECHO needs more collaboration with other Commission services and EU institutions to increase policy coherence related to:



N=38

Overall, a majority of the respondents agree that DG ECHO needs to largely or fully collaborate with other Commission services and EU institutions to improve the coherence of their humanitarian aid policies. This is particularly the case in relation to humanitarian aid and development aid and disaster risk reduction. Across the three areas selected, UN and Red Cross respondents tended to be in favour of improved cooperation between DG ECHO and other Commission services and EU institutions.

The respondents were then asked what they thought were the main factors supporting a coherent approach to humanitarian aid at EU level (i.e. with other Commission services, EU institutions, international donors and Member States)<sup>3</sup>. The main response trend was that humanitarian aid policy should be independent from national policy priorities and that DG ECHO decision making should be similarly independent, but that joint planning and programme between various Commission DGs (and a wider range of humanitarian stakeholders) was needed to ensure a fully needs-based approach in humanitarian interventions.

In turn, the survey respondents were asked what they thought were the main barriers to a coherent approach to humanitarian aid at EU level. Several recurring reasons were given, including the poor articulation and alignment of the financing cycles and procedures of DG ECHO and DG DEVCO, conflicting political interests which can sometimes run counter to humanitarian principles, lack of financial flexibility, lack of information sharing and planning at an early stage between Commission DGs and Member States.

Two partners (UN agencies and AVSI) share the opinion that there is, in theory, a joined up approach at the policy level on the part of the EU. However, this does not consistently translate in practice in the field. The UN gives as an example the lack of implementation

<sup>3</sup> OPC Question: What are, in your view, the main factors supporting a coherent approach to humanitarian aid at EU level (i.e. with other Commission services, EU institutions, international donors and Member States)?



of the humanitarian-development nexus. This idea is backed by AVSI who warns that the humanitarian and development actions are still perceived as two different areas and so, treated with different approaches, which endanger their complementarity. When it comes to LRRD they both agree that there is a need for an improved collaboration among EU services.

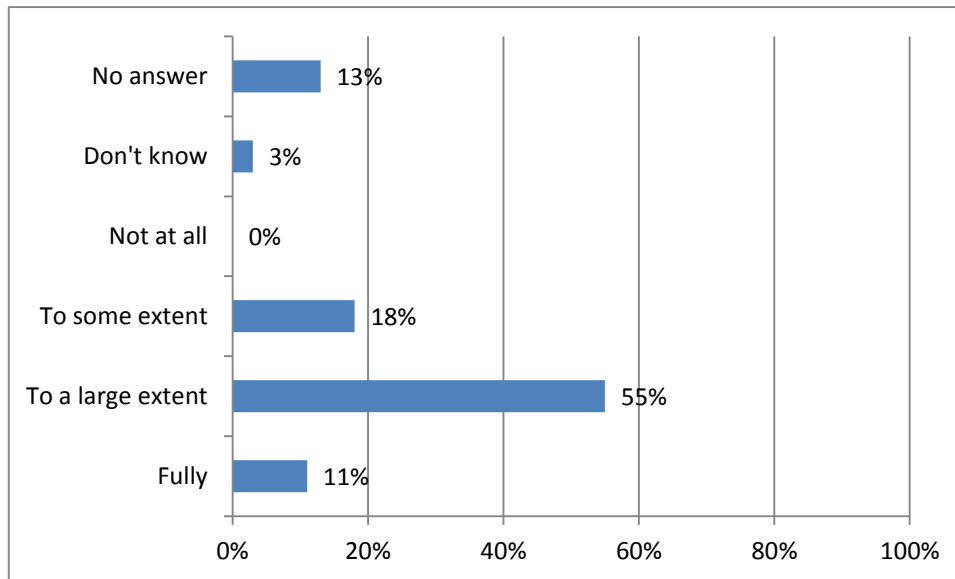
The Red Cross, for its part, note that they perceive a correlation between the decreasing EU humanitarian assistance and the increasing EU Trust Funds financing. They warn ECHO that humanitarian assistance should not be replaced by EU Trust Funds. Feeling that this separation is not clear at present, the Red Cross is concerned about the lack of transparency and accountability mechanism for Trust Funds. In the same way as humanitarian assistance and the EU Trust Fund should remain separated, the Red Cross also recommends to keep civil protection separated from humanitarian aid. Although synergies could/should be established between the two instruments, the Red Cross believes that each should be specialised in its own domain in order avoid duplication and so, ensure efficient regional and local response mechanism.

### ***Coherence between ECHO and the humanitarian system in the field***

Both the Red Cross and CARE recognise in their position papers the importance that ECHO gives to the coordination of humanitarian action with other actors. CARE acknowledged the importance that ECHO places on participation in Humanitarian Country Teams and global and national clusters. These enable better coordination among donors but also allow for a sharing of first-hand information on the needs. For instance, CARE finds ECHO's engagement with the Global Shelter Cluster and the UK shelter forum useful in aligning the programming of actors with the expectations of donors. However, CARE also highlights that inconsistencies remains from country to country on how ECHO implements its shelter and settlements funding and, between ECHO's and other donor's policies. The Red Cross, for its part, recognise ECHO's active role in the development of policy guidelines on funding, advocacy and coordination with other actors. However, they recommend ECHO to further strengthen dialogue with Civil Society Organisations and international organisations. The guidelines need to be better based on field experience, lessons learned, and a more frequent consultation with the Civil Society Organisations.

## EU added value

Figure A1.8 To what extent do you agree that actions financed by DG ECHO on the ground have a clear added value to actions financed by other donors, including Member States?



N=38

Overall, there was wide agreement that EU-funded actions have had clear added value to actions financed by other donors, including Member States. Similar response patterns were observable across the various groups of respondent. Both respondents on behalf of the UN indicated that the Commission were particularly positive in this regard. Only one responding NGO and one citizen disagreed with the fact that Commission actions have added value to other actions.

According to CARE, a general comparative advantage that ECHO has developed over the years is its focus on forgotten crisis. This is an added value that Member States, who have always been more driven by particular historic connections and political positioning, can't assume.<sup>4</sup>

The most common reason given by the respondents in the survey with regard to the EU added value generated by the Commission<sup>5</sup> was that it has inspired Member States and donors alike to develop their own policies and engaged partners in collective reflection on thematic issues. VOICE, in its position paper, adds that ECHO has a strong influence on other donors; its standards and expertise, as well as the assessments of partners are trusted.

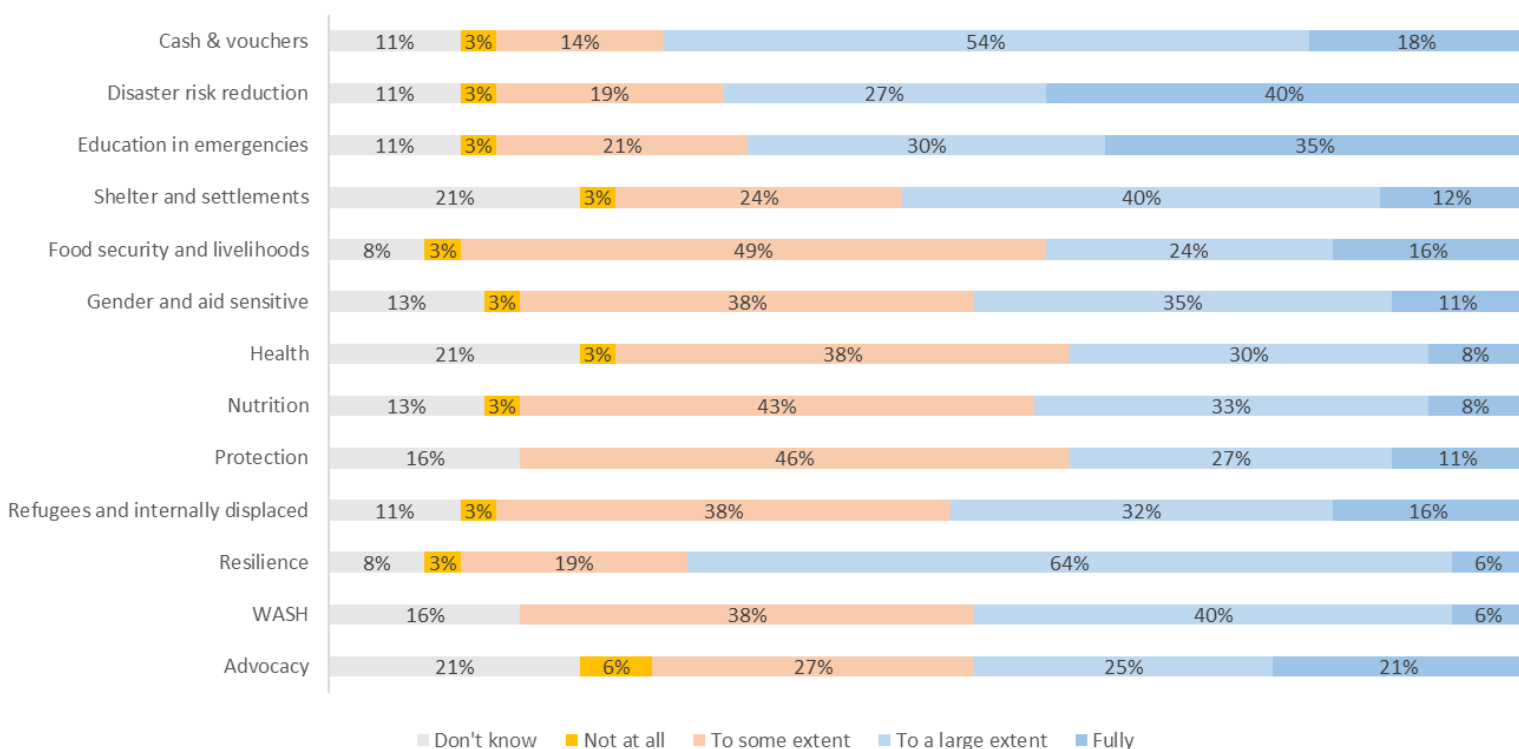
Another frequently given reason is that thanks to its outreach and global network of field experts, the Commission is driving humanitarian aid forward, including in specific areas such as cash and food security and gender- and age-sensitive aid. ECHO's field network added value has been further developed in the Red Cross position paper, where it says that the efforts of the field network to regularly consult humanitarian partners and include

<sup>4</sup> 2017, CARE, position paper.

<sup>5</sup> OPC Question: Please elaborate on your rating relating to EU added value

them in assessments that form the basis of Humanitarian Implementation Plans is highly appreciated.

Figure A1.9 To what extent do you agree that policies developed by DG ECHO have added value to the international humanitarian aid political agenda over the last years in the following areas?



N=37<sup>6</sup>

Overall, a significant majority of respondents agreed that the Commission policies have recently added significant value to the international humanitarian aid and political agenda across a wide area of issues, in particular on cash and vouchers (72% largely or fully agree), resilience (70% largely or fully agree), disaster risk reduction (67% largely or fully agree) and education in emergencies (65% largely or fully agree), National government agencies, UN and Red Cross respondents indicated in most cases significant contributions made by the Commission across all the policy issues as listed in the table above. The results were slightly more mixed among the responding citizens.

The UN agencies, CARE and AVSI, all recognize in their position papers ECHO's efforts and guidance to promote the use of Multipurpose Cash Transfer. However, all three of them call on ECHO to remain cautious with the use of cash and vouchers. As highlighted by CARE, ECHO needs to bear in mind that the success of cash transfer programmes depends on different factors: the inclusion of the financial services, the constant adaptation to the fast changing environment and, the coordination with all the concerned sectors. AVSI confirms this statement, adding that cash transfer should be chosen based on the context, the needs and the dialogue with partners and market analyses for the particular response. Donors have to be cautious with the general idea that cash transfer are the best response.

<sup>6</sup> The same respondent did not answer this series of questions

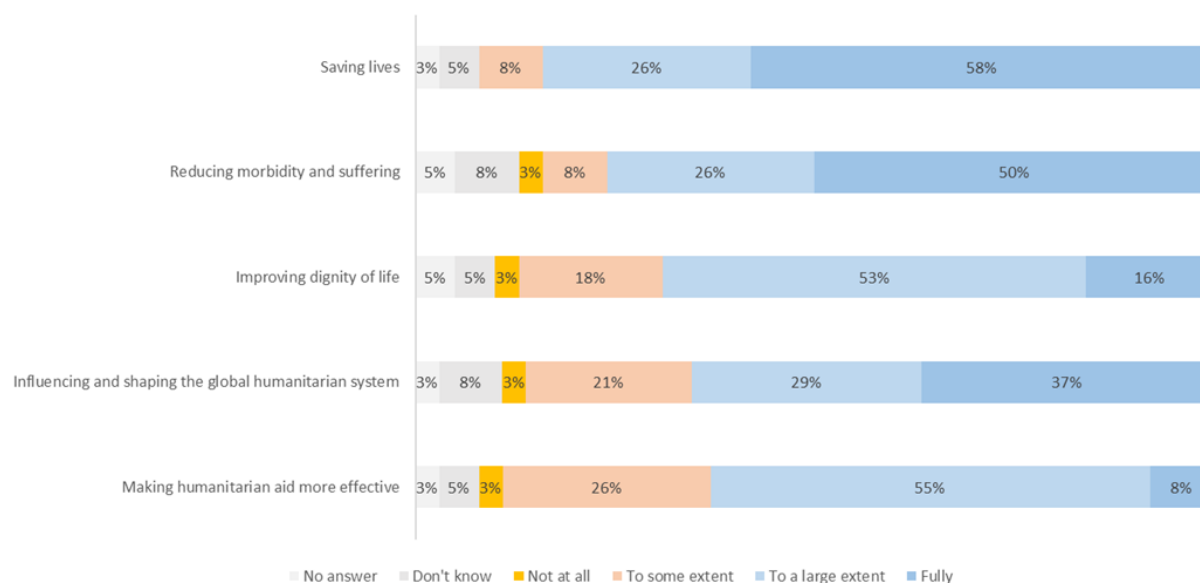
The survey respondents were asked to share their views on the key factors contributing to the EU added value of the Commission<sup>7</sup>. The most commonly cited factors were the diversity of partnerships between the Commission and other worldwide organisations (e.g. UN, Red Cross) and with various NGOs to identify and address diverse needs, as well as the field presence of the Commission. Respondents also frequently identified needs-based programming and the delivery of activities monitored by field experts as the key aspects of the Commission's EU added value<sup>8</sup>.

Some respondents gave examples of projects which could not have been achieved without a coordinated efforts at EU level<sup>9</sup>, these include: the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, EU strong and common position at the World Health Summit, field visits for the Council working party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid, the Bêkou Trust Fund; Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the RESET and AGIR programmes, and the coordinated response to the Ebola crisis in Africa.

Finally, the UN agencies and CARE acknowledge in their position papers that ECHO's attention to several innovative topics makes it a frontrunner and a recognized leader. Such topics are education in emergencies, the focus on gender issues in emergencies and the efforts put on disaster risk reduction and resilience (in particular thanks to the DIPECHO programme). Indeed, these calls present a strategic direction and encourage applicants to maintain and/or mainstream these thematic areas (UN).

## Effectiveness

Figure A1.10 To what extent do you agree that ECHO funded actions have met identified humanitarian needs and significantly contributed to:



N=38

<sup>7</sup> OPC Question: What are the key factors contributing to the added value of ECHO's funded actions?

<sup>8</sup> OPC Question: What specific aspects contribute to the added value of DG ECHO (for example, programming through a needs-based approach, programming focussing on specific sectors / regions, delivery through 'certified' framework partners, delivery monitored by DG ECHO field experts, etc.)?

<sup>9</sup> OPC Question: Do you have any examples of projects or policy results that could not have been achieved without a coordinated effort at the EU level?

Overall, there was wide recognition among the respondents that the Commission interventions have fully or significantly contributed to saving lives, reducing mobility and suffering, improving dignity of life, influencing the global humanitarian system, and making humanitarian aid more effective. Respondents on behalf of national government agencies, and the UN and Red Cross consistently held the same positive views. The views of NGOs reflect the overall results while responses from private citizens may have been less positive than average.

Several survey respondents stated<sup>10</sup> that the main objectives of saving lives and reducing suffering has been achieved through the Commission policies and funding and recognised the effectiveness of the Commission as a global player, donor and policy maker, able to influence the humanitarian international system and constantly striving to improve. On the other hand, certain respondents pointed out that the Commission's administration, albeit relying on an effective needs-based approach, could be more flexible, less prescriptive and less bureaucratic.

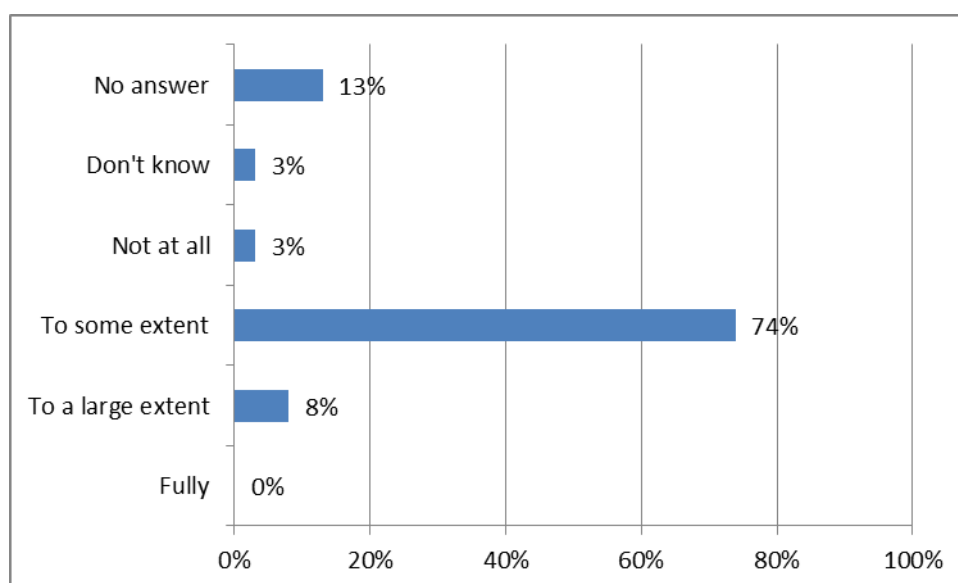
Although the general views from the surveys reflect a positive picture of ECHO's effectiveness, in their position papers, CARE and Handicap International have partly contested ECHO's capacity to reduce morbidity and suffering in two specific areas. According to CARE, while the needs and demand are high on this matter, ECHO is currently not providing sufficient attention to sexual and reproductive health and rights. There is a missed opportunity from ECHO to implement this as a core sector of response. CARE recommends ECHO to promote Sexual and Reproductive Health from the onset of every crisis and to ensure the delivery and continuity of services related to family planning and sexual violence against women and girls. Handicap International, for its part, regret ECHO's lack of resources allocated to the inclusion of people with disabilities and their representative organisations in the programme cycle. They suggest that ECHO increases its attention to this issue and increase funding to humanitarian projects inclusive of person with disabilities.

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<sup>10</sup> OPC Question: Please elaborate on your rating relating to effectiveness

## Sustainability

Figure A1.11 To what extent do you agree that most humanitarian aid activities / approaches financed by DG ECHO continue even after DG ECHO humanitarian aid funding has ended (e.g. continued by the local community or another donor)?



N=38

Almost three-quarters of the survey respondents held the view that most EU-funded activities were somehow continued by local communities or other donors even after EU funding has ended, although none considered that they continued in the same way. Response trends were similar among the different respondent categories, with the exception that respondents on behalf of the UN thought that most EU-funded activities continued to be supported by local communities and donors to a large extent after EU funding has ended.

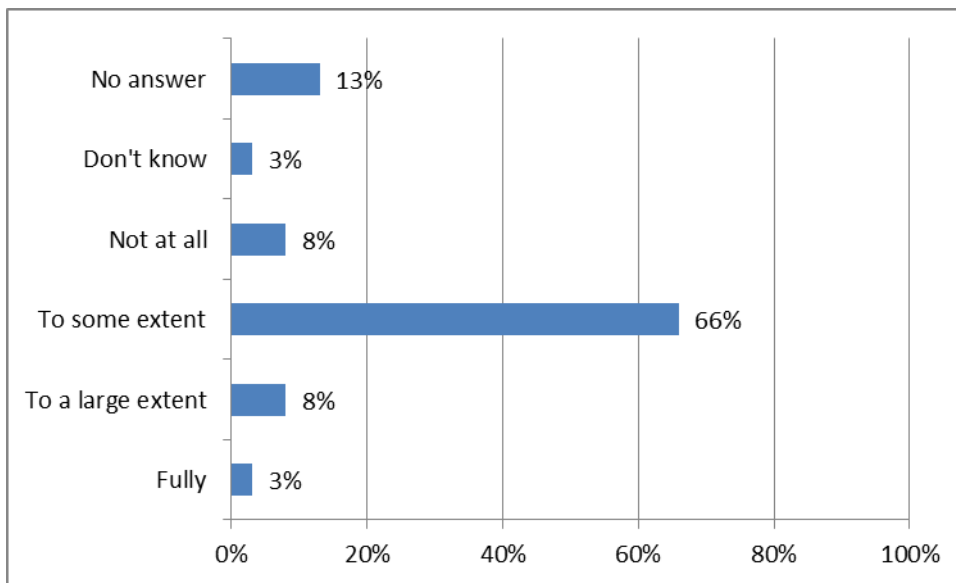
Respondents frequently stated<sup>11</sup> that the sustainability of Commission actions lied in their focus on the capacity building of frontline respondents and on the early engagement of local and development stakeholders. A few respondents also recognised that closer DEVCO-ECHO collaboration and coordination has in practice contributed to the sustainability of actions, but that there was still room for improvement in this regard. Indeed, as stated by VOICE in its position paper, although ECHO is contributing to positive improvements in the field of LRRD, VOICE emphasizes that ECHO should improve its coordination with other relevant actors; clarifying the roles and responsibilities, articulate the different funding instruments and ensure that closer cooperation and coordination between humanitarian and development policies does not undermine timely humanitarian response.

Some respondents also mentioned that more long-term funding mechanisms would further improve the sustainability of Commission actions.

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<sup>11</sup> OPC Question: Please elaborate on your rating relating to sustainability

Figure A1.12 To what extent do you agree that most humanitarian aid activities / approaches financed by DG ECHO transition into the next phase of development after DG ECHO humanitarian aid funding has ended?

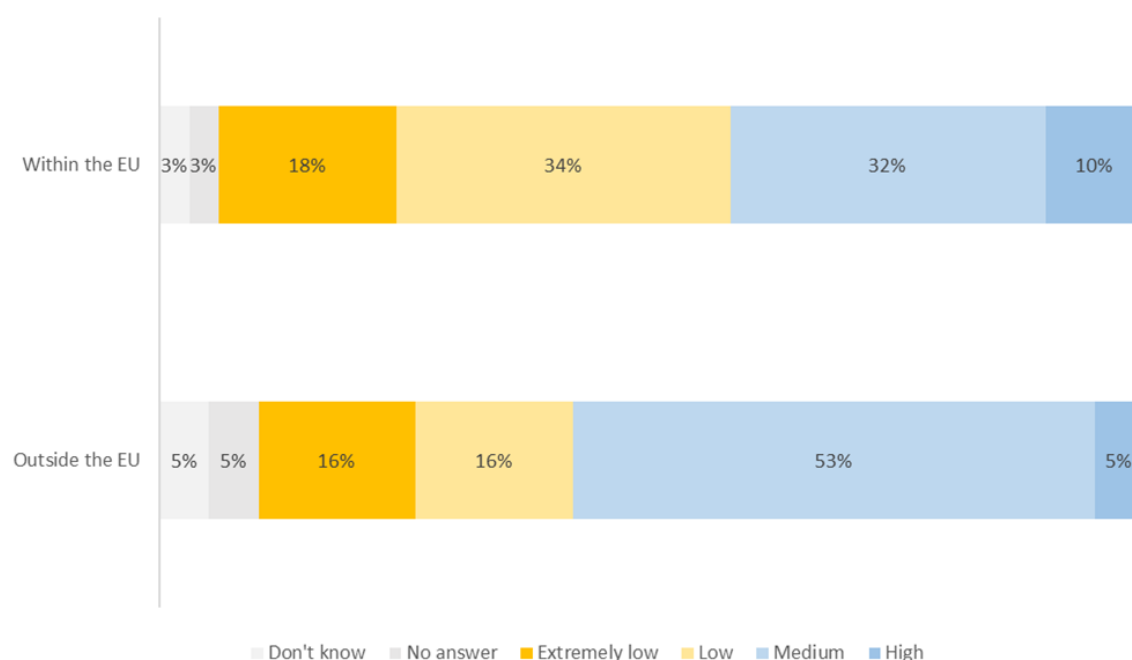


N=38

Two-thirds of the survey respondents held the view that most Commission humanitarian activities evolved into the next phase of development after EU funding had ended (e.g. transition from relief to rehabilitation or from humanitarian aid to development). The respond trends were relatively consistent among the different respondent categories.

## Visibility

Figure A1.13 How would you rate the level of awareness of DG ECHO's activities?



N=38

Differences in response patterns emerge regarding appreciation of the level of awareness of Commission humanitarian activities within and outside the EU. The majority of the survey respondents believe that awareness of Commission humanitarian activities outside the EU is "medium", i.e. Commission humanitarian activities are well known by a relatively small part of the general public. On the other hand, the majority of the survey respondents consider that awareness of Commission humanitarian activities within the EU is either "low" or "extremely low", i.e. Commission humanitarian activities are only well known by a specialised audience with an interest in humanitarian aid. Differences also emerged among the respondent categories with all three national government agencies expressing the view that the level of awareness of Commission humanitarian activities within the EU is "medium" and respondents on behalf of the Red Cross concerned that awareness of Commission humanitarian activities is "extremely low" within the EU. Perhaps more tellingly, most of the responding citizens also thought that awareness of Commission humanitarian activities was "low" or "extremely low", not only within the EU but also outside the EU.

In terms of visibility<sup>12</sup>, several respondents acknowledged that EU citizens know about the humanitarian aid dimension of the EU but not necessarily about the work of the Commission directly. They tended to agree that only specialised audiences have knowledge of the specific role and strategies of the Commission in the humanitarian aid field.

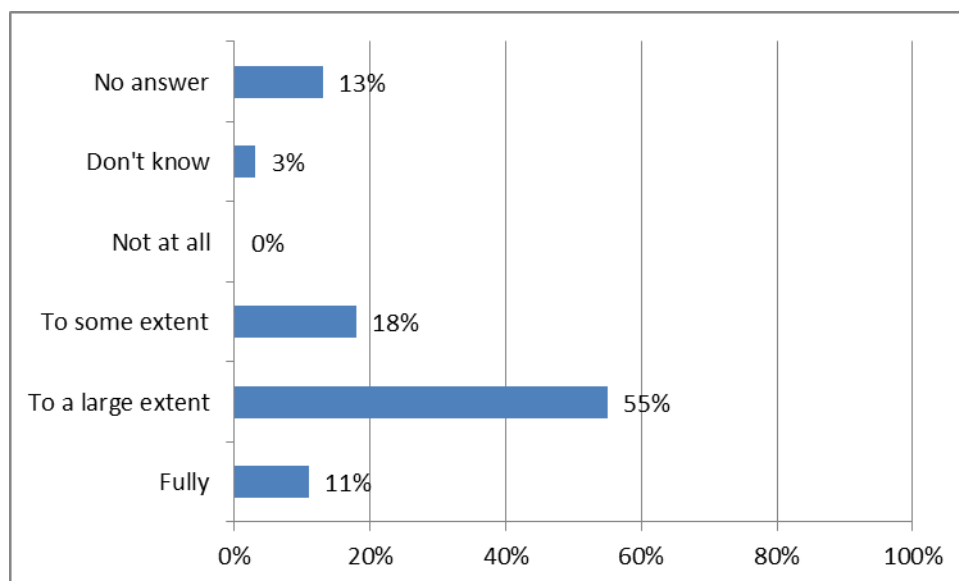
### Follow-up to the Commission's international commitments and global humanitarian challenges

<sup>12</sup> OPC Question: Please elaborate on your rating relating to visibility



This section of the OPC focused on assessing the implications of the World Humanitarian, and other international commitments for the Commission's strategic direction and Summit the Grand Bargain operating framework.

*Figure A1.14 Based on your knowledge and experience, to what extent is DG ECHO contributing to progress on the EU commitments?*



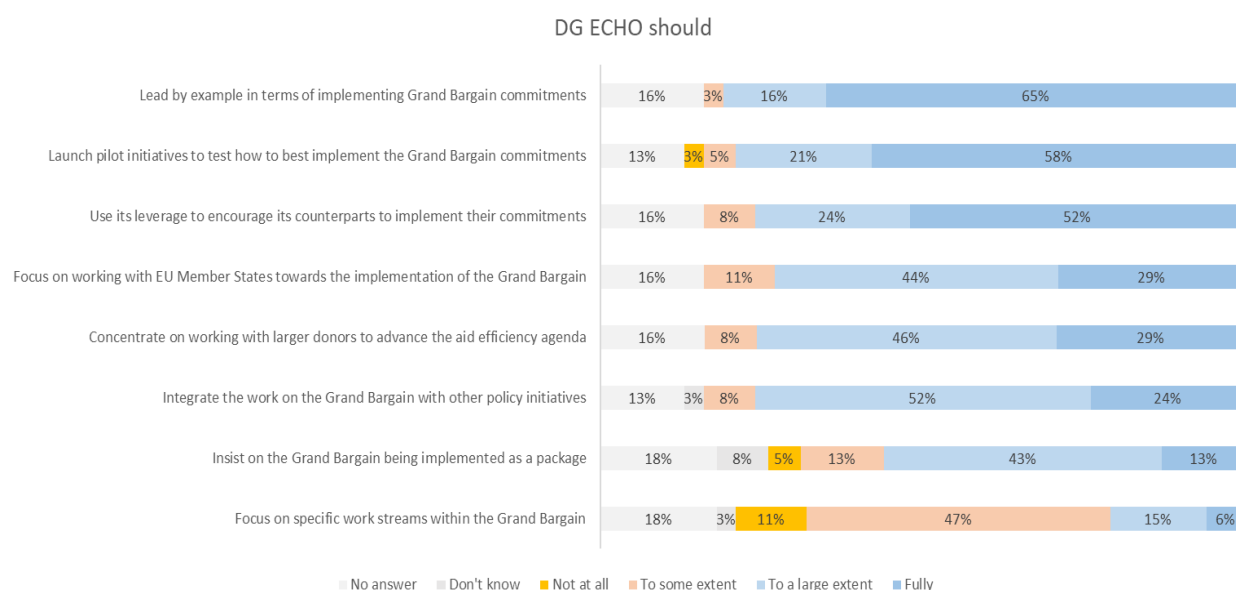
*N=38*

The majority of the survey respondents hold the view that the Commission is largely contributing to progress on EU humanitarian commitments. Each of the three responding national government agencies had a different view, ranging from "to some extent" (UK) to "fully" (FR). Both respondents on behalf of the Red Cross believed that the Commission largely contributed to EU humanitarian commitments.

Very few respondents rated the progress of the Commission across its seven areas of intervention<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless, "investing in humanity" was most frequently rated as the area where the Commission had made the most progress (37% of the respondents), closely followed by "addressing forced displacement" (34%). On the other hand, "upholding the norms that safeguard humanity" was most frequently rated as the area where the Commission had made the least progress (42% of the respondents).

<sup>13</sup> Political leadership to prevent and end conflict; Upholding the norms that safeguard humanity; Leave no one behind: A commitment to address forced displacement; Women and girls: Catalysing action to achieve gender equality; Changing people's lives: From delivering aid to ending needs; Natural disasters and climate change: Managing risks and crises differently; Financing: Investing in humanity

*Figure A1.15 In terms of what role ECHO should or should not take in the global process of implementing the Grand Bargain, please rate your level of agreement with each of the below statements*



*N=38*

Almost two-thirds of the survey respondents were in full agreement that the Commission should lead by example in implementing Grand Bargain commitments. The majority of the survey respondents were also in full agreement that the Commission should launch pilot commitments relating to the implementation of the Grand Bargain (58%) and that it should use its leverage as one of the biggest humanitarian donors to encourage its counterparts to implement Grand Bargain commitments (52%). Response patterns were relatively similar among the different respondent categories.

Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance several proposed actions the Commission could take to drive forward the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments. Again, very few survey respondents addressed this specific question. The results nevertheless show that 58% of the respondents held the view that the Commission should above all lead by example in this regard. Comparable trends were observed among the different respondent categories.

Similarly, few respondents expressed a view as to which upcoming issues were the most important for the Commission to address. The respondents most frequently thought that the changing character of crises (increasingly becoming protracted) and the increased need of protection among humanitarian workers were the most important upcoming issues the Commission should address (39% and 32% of respondents respectively). Several survey respondents explained their choice<sup>14</sup>: i.e. the long-term impact of humanitarian actions needs to be carefully considered given the changing character and protracted nature of crises; the increased need of protection among humanitarian workers is critical to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable.

<sup>14</sup> OPC Question: Please explain your reasons for prioritising the five challenges as above and indicate how you feel these should be addressed by DG ECHO

The survey respondents were asked how, in their opinion, the Commission should ensure adequate follow up to the World Humanitarian Summit to transform its commitments into reality<sup>15</sup>. A considerable number of respondents (on behalf of NGOs, international organisations and national government agencies) expressed the view that the EU should provide adequate and flexible funding – and increase the volume of funding in the next Multiannual Financial Framework – to continue to support a needs-based approach and local-level humanitarian workers. Several NGOs also pointed out that it was important to further engage Member States and other EU institutions in the respect of international humanitarian law.

Finally, it is worth mentioning, from CARE’s position paper, that the EU has made significant progress on the WHS commitments and, it is encouraged to continue on this path; ensuring a significant level of engagement in the years to come and working in balanced way on the different priorities.

On ways in which ECHO could provide added value regarding the implementation of the Grand Bargain<sup>16</sup>, the most frequently given response (mainly among NGOs) was that the Commission should foster dialogue with co-conveners to ensure greater synergy among the work streams and that implementation should aim to foster complementarities between the global, national, and local level.

The survey respondents were also asked for their views on actions the Commission should take to carry out under the Great Bargain commitments<sup>17</sup>. Responses were relatively varied, the most frequent one being that the Commission should engage proactively with its partners to implement the Great Bargain and should fulfil its commitment to building the capacity of frontline respondents. Other suggestions made by the NGOs include: making the decision-making process more transparent and accountable to the affected populations through the involvement of local-level stakeholders, add localisation as a key criterion for proposal selection, supporting tools for improving cost-effectiveness and simplifying the reporting procedure.

The localisation question has been addressed in five position papers (Red Cross, CARE, AVSI, VOICE and Trocaire). All five agree on the fact that ECHO should do more to promote localisation of the humanitarian action in order to increase efficiency and reduce costs. A better inclusion of the frontline responders would improve the delivery of aid on the ground (VOICE). The position papers suggest some elements that could improve localisation; add localisation as a key selection criterion, implementation of a localisation marker, allow for more flexibility in staffing including local staff, increase the funding to local capacity building, promote an internal culture on working with local actors, further encourage the participation of local and affected communities (CARE, AVSI, Trocaire). ECHO should find the right balance and ensure that the responses are as local as possible but also as international as necessary. This is a commitment that requires creativity and genuine engagement with the actors (Trocaire).

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<sup>15</sup> OPC Question: What further initiatives should DG ECHO take to ensure adequate follow up to the WHS to transform the commitments into reality?

<sup>16</sup> OPC Question: How should ECHO provide added value regarding the implementation of the Grand Bargain?

<sup>17</sup> OPC Question: What specific actions should ECHO plan to carry out under the GB commitments? Please specify the commitment concerned and elaborate on the action?

As a consequence of increased localisation and further engagement with local partners, it is necessary that ECHO simplifies its administrative requirements. This has been called on by the UN agencies and Trocaire in their position papers who ask for more transparency in the decision-making (Trocaire) and claim that reducing the administrative burden (proposal, reporting, verification exercises, audits) could free up significant resources (UN agencies).

Finally, a last factor that would improve ECHO's actions' efficiency, mentioned by the UN agencies, VOICE and Trocaire in their position papers, is the shift from annual funding to multi-year funding. As defended by the UN agencies, the efficiency, the quality and the sustainability of the interventions would be improved. It would also encourage a more coordinated and harmonised approach to humanitarian actions (VOICE).

The survey respondents were asked which other global humanitarian challenges should be considered by the Commission<sup>18</sup>. The most frequent response, coming mainly from NGOs, was that forgotten and neglected crises deserve more attention and that it is important to prevent donor fatigue when it comes to protracted crises.

Regarding any further policy areas or topics that should be covered by the Commission<sup>19</sup>, the survey respondents proposed improving civil-military coordination, upholding international humanitarian law, strengthening community resilience, and addressing climate change. A recurrent answer among NGOs was that the Commission should strengthen its strategic partnerships with humanitarian organisations (NGOs and new donors) to enhance the diversity and improve the quality of humanitarian aid delivery.

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<sup>18</sup> OPC Question: In addition to those listed above, are there any further global humanitarian challenges which are to be considered by DG ECHO?

<sup>19</sup> OPC Questions: Are there any further adjoining policy areas, beyond those related to Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), with which DG ECHO should seek to further establishing links? If yes, which are those? Are there any further topics that you feel should be addressed by DG ECHO in future?