



## European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

# Food assistance

### What is it?

The EU provides food assistance in anticipation of, during, and in the aftermath of a humanitarian crisis. It aims to save lives and livelihoods by averting widespread hunger.

Through its humanitarian food assistance, the EU aims to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for the most hungry and vulnerable people in crises.

### Why is this important?

In 2022, food insecurity reached unprecedented levels, both in scale and severity. According to the Global Report on Food Crises, at least 205 million people are currently acutely food insecure and require urgent assistance. This is the highest level on record and doubles the figure of 2016.

Food insecurity has been following an alarming trend in the last 5 years, mainly owing to conflicts, economic shocks (many associated with the effects of COVID-19), and climate change.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine dramatically exacerbated the situation through its impact on food, energy and fertiliser prices, as well as supply chain disruptions.

The timely and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance is at risk due to the simultaneous and sudden increase in needs and operational costs. UN agencies are warning of a worsening situation in the near future.

The Hunger Hotspots analysis confirms that Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen remain at risk of famine.

Such risk is likely to materialise in the districts of Baidoa and Burhakaba in the Bay region of Somalia. Famine-like conditions are already present and famine will likely be formally declared in the coming months unless urgent action is taken.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kenya, the Sahel region, Sudan, and Syria remain of very high concern.

Around 970,000 people worldwide are facing catastrophic conditions of food insecurity (IPC/CH 5) in 2022. This is the highest level in the integrated food-security phase classification.

### How are we helping?

The EU provides humanitarian food assistance to victims of food crises worldwide and invests in reducing the risk of famine.

Since 2010, the EU has been rolling out its humanitarian food-assistance policy and helped more than 100 million people lacking access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food.

Last year, around 25% of the EU's annual humanitarian aid budget was used to provide emergency food assistance and nutrition. This makes the EU one of the world's major donors in this area.

In 2022, given the severity and scale of the current food crises, the share is estimated to be 1/3 of all EU humanitarian funding.

EU food assistance is adapted to each specific crisis and the needs of different groups, for example, children under 5 years old. The EU provides the most vulnerable people with essential and nutritious food items during critical times.

A significant part of our food assistance is provided in the form of cash transfers. This is because sometimes there is enough food in shops and markets, but the victims of disasters do not have money to purchase it.

When this happens, the EU prefers helping vulnerable people get access to the food they need by giving them money to buy it. This is often more efficient and effective than shipping sacks of rice or flour across the globe.

The EU prioritises providing sustainable solutions and restoring self-reliance by building resilience and protecting the livelihoods of households at risk of food shortages. It does this in many ways, such as by giving seeds and toolkits to vulnerable family farmers so they can grow their own food and restore their livelihoods.

The European Commission is a member of the Food Assistance Convention and commits to providing a minimum of €350 million annually to alleviate food insecurity. The EU largely exceeded its commitment in 2022 already allocating approximately €950 million for humanitarian food assistance and nutrition.

## Facts & figures

Largest beneficiaries of EU-funded food assistance in 2022:

- Afghanistan
- Sudan
- Yemen

EU humanitarian food assistance in 2022:  
around **€950 million**.

**1/3** of the EU's total humanitarian budget