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Commission



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European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Gender- and age-sensitive aid

What is it?

Natural hazards and human-induced crises are not gender neutral: they have a different impact on women, girls, boys, and men. They are also not age neutral.

To respond effectively to different needs, EU humanitarian assistance must take gender and age into account.

Why is this important?

Integrating gender and age enhances the quality of humanitarian programming. This is in line with the EU's humanitarian mandate and other international commitments.

Aid that is not gender- and age-sensitive is less effective. It risks not reaching the most vulnerable people or not responding adequately to their specific needs.

Furthermore, it could expose vulnerable populations to the risk of sexual and gender-based violence.

How are we helping?

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid stresses the need to integrate gender considerations. This includes protection strategies against sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) in humanitarian response.

The Consensus considers that crisis-affected women, girls, boys, and men should participate in the design, implementation, and evaluation of humanitarian actions.

The European Commission's document 'Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance' of 2013 outlines a reinforced policy approach to gender and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, the European Commission introduced a Gender-Age Marker in 2014. This tool measures how EU-funded humanitarian actions integrate gender and age considerations.

In 2020, the second assessment report highlighted that in 2016 and 2017, 89% of all EU humanitarian aid integrated gender and age considerations 'strongly' or 'to a certain extent'.

In 2016, the European Commission issued a policy with further guidance for protection activities, including gender-based violence.

In November 2020, the EU adopted its third Gender Action Plan for 2021-2025. It sets out the framework for action for all activities on gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's external relations, as well as for Member States.

The Gender Action Plan includes several humanitarian priorities, including gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, and the Gender-Age Marker.

In 2013, the 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies' was established. This is a global initiative to implement structural changes in the humanitarian system to address GBV.

The initiative brings together more than 100 partners, including the EU and 16 of its Member States, as well as other countries, NGOs, and international organisations. The EU has been an active member of the Call to Action and led this initiative in 2017-2018.

The EU's annual progress reports can be found on the official website.

In January 2021, the EU renewed its commitments to the Call to Action roadmap 2021-2025. Among other things, the EU commits to:

- implement and disseminate its relevant humanitarian policies for GBV in emergencies
- support capacity-building of its staff and partners to enhance systemic integration of gender considerations into humanitarian assistance
- continue to advocate for:
 - addressing GBV in emergencies from the onset of crises
 - the importance of GBV risk mitigation and gender-sensitive humanitarian aid
 - promoting the work of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, including through its engagement with the EU Member States
- respond to GBV in emergencies against women, girls, men, and boys
- report annually on funding allocations for humanitarian-targeted actions that respond to GBV in line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2008)
- incorporate protection strategies against GBV in all aspects of humanitarian assistance
- promote the active participation of women in humanitarian aid
- implement a Nexus approach in preventing and responding to gender-based violence, wherever feasible.

Facts & figures

EU humanitarian funding on gender and age for 2021:

- **€33 million** to prevent and address gender-based violence
- **€29 million** for reproductive health