

European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps

The European Commission's proposal for the setting up of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) is aimed at encouraging young Europeans to contribute to EU humanitarian aid operations and make them more visible. With pilot volunteers already on the ground, adoption of the proposed regulation will ensure the initiative maximises its contribution to EU aid objectives.

Background

Recent relief operations around the world have highlighted that European Union (EU) humanitarian aid is often overshadowed by that of other international organisations. This is despite the fact that the contributions from the EU and its Member States together account for [more than half](#) of all international official humanitarian aid. The Lisbon Treaty introduced [Article 214\(5\)](#) TFEU, creating a framework for young people to contribute to EU humanitarian aid operations.

The Commission published a [2010 Communication](#) on means to express EU citizens' solidarity through the setting up of EU volunteers Corps inspired by the model of the [United Nations Volunteers Programme](#). In its [Conclusions](#) of 17 May 2011 on EVHAC, the Council underlined that it should be cost-effective, it should build upon existing national and international voluntary schemes without duplicating them, and finally, should be focused at addressing concrete needs and gaps in the humanitarian field. Subsequently, on 29 September 2011, Parliament adopted a [written declaration](#) calling for the establishment of an EVHAC.

The Commission's proposal

Following up its Communication, on 19 September 2012, the Commission adopted a [proposal for a regulation](#) establishing the EVHAC, on the legal base of Article 214(5) TFEU. The proposal's main objective is to express the EU's humanitarian values and solidarity with people in need and translate it into concrete actions through an effective and visible European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps. The proposal underlines that the actions of the Corps would be guided by [EU humanitarian principles](#) and deployments based on real needs identified on the ground. Further to agreement on the 2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework, the budget will be [€147.9 million](#), not affecting the EU budget for humanitarian aid operations.

European Parliament

On 23 April 2013, the Committee on Development (DEVE) (rapporteur Michèle Striffler, EPP, France) unanimously adopted its [report](#) on EVHAC. The report supports the Commission's proposal, adding the stipulation that EU aid volunteers, adequately trained, should be deployed in humanitarian aid operations in accordance with the [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#) except in the context of armed conflicts. DEVE members recommended the adoption of a multiannual work programme defining the objectives, the expected results and financial allocations. Lastly, the DEVE Committee proposed that the effective humanitarian contribution made by volunteers and the quality of the actions carried out be evaluated no later than 30 June 2017. Agreement on the proposal was reached in trilogue with the Council in December 2013. The DEVE Committee approved the compromise in December, and it now comes to plenary.

NGOs

The main humanitarian aid organisations have been involved in the process of developing the concept of the EVHAC since the beginning, in early 2010. They all support the Commission's proposal. Nevertheless, [VOICE](#) underlines the need for constant evaluation of the Corps as it develops. So too does the [Red Cross](#), which believes that further investments should be given to monitoring and evaluation of the different types of actions of EU Aid Volunteers, in order to measure the added value of EVHAC.