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*Plenary sitting*

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**A9-0321/2023**

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# REPORT

on how to build an innovative humanitarian aid strategy: spotlight on current  
and forgotten crises  
(2023/2000(INI))

Committee on Development

Rapporteur: Carlos Zorrinho

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on how to build an innovative humanitarian aid strategy: spotlight on current and forgotten crises  
(2023/2000(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 208 and 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Council Decision 2003/335/JHA of 8 May 2003 on the investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2023/720 of 31 March 2023 amending certain Council Regulations concerning restrictive measures in order to insert provisions on a humanitarian exemption<sup>4</sup> and to Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/726 of 31 March 2023 amending certain Council Decisions concerning restrictive measures in order to insert provisions on a humanitarian exemption<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission on the European Consensus on humanitarian aid, published in the Official Journal on 30 January 2008<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD), in particular Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies and Articles 4.3 and 33.3 on the consultation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organisations, in the development, implementation and monitoring of legislation and policies, and to the Operational Protocol thereto of December 2006,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 118, 14.5.2003, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 94, 3.4.2023, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 94, 3.4.2023, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 25, 30.1.2008, p. 1.

ratified by the EU in December 2010,

- having regard to the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines for inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action of July 2019,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 2475 (2019) on the protection of persons with disabilities in armed conflict,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 March 2021 entitled ‘Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030’ (COM(2021)0101) and to the operational guidance for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU-funded humanitarian aid operations of the Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO),
- having regard to the EU Humanitarian Partnership 2021-2027 and its goal to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid,
- having regard to the UNICEF communication of July 2021 entitled ‘Financing an inclusive recovery for children: A call to action’,
- having regard to the UN Economic Commission for Africa communication of 21 December 2022 entitled ‘Special drawing rights must be relocated to avail sustainable financing for Africa’,
- having regard to the African Development Bank Group communication of 15 April 2022 entitled ‘Special drawing rights and reallocating for low income countries’,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 10 March 2021 on the EU’s humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles (COM(2021)0110) and the subsequent Council conclusions of 20 May 2021,
- having regard to Council conclusions of 22 May 2023 on addressing the humanitarian funding gap,
- having regard to the UN Security Council Resolution 2664 (2022) on a humanitarian exemption to asset freeze measures imposed by United Nations Sanctions Regimes,
- having regard to the report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees of 21 June 2023 entitled ‘A threat to lives, dignity and hope: The implications of underfunding UNHCR’s activities in 2023’,
- having regard to the updated European Union Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 2286 (2016) of 3 May 2016 on the protection of the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel in

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<sup>7</sup> OJ C 303, 15.12.2009, p. 12.

armed conflict,

- having regard to the report of the UN Secretary-General of 23 August 2016 on the outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit and the commitments made by the participants at that summit,
- having regard to the Grand Bargain agreement signed on 23 May 2016, to the annual independent reports thereon, in particular the 2021 report, and to the Grand Bargain 2.0 framework and the annexes thereto presented at the Grand Bargain annual meeting of 15-17 June 2021, as well as to the renewed commitments made at the Grand Bargain annual meeting of 19-20 June 2023,
- having regard to the report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees of July 2021 on the use of flexible funding in 2020, and the updates thereto,
- having regard to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015-2030 adopted on 18 March 2015 at the third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, to the outcomes of the sessions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in Cancun, Mexico, in 2017 and Geneva, Switzerland, in 2019, and to the 2023 Report of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework,
- having regard to the Commission Recommendation of 8 February 2023 on Union disaster resilience goals<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations and the humanitarian aid donors' declaration on climate and the environment of March 2022,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to the 2022 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report of the global organisation Development Initiatives,
- having regard to the 2023 Global Humanitarian Overview of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the monthly updates thereto,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2020 on Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy<sup>9</sup>,
- having regard to its resolutions on humanitarian aid, in particular those of 15 December 2021 on new orientations for the EU's humanitarian action<sup>10</sup>, of 6 July 2022 on addressing food security in developing countries<sup>11</sup>, and of 15 December 2022 on upscaling the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework for a

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<sup>8</sup> OJ C 56, 15.2.2023, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> OJ C 404, 6.10.2021, p. 202.

<sup>10</sup> OJ C 251, 30.6.2022, p. 80.

<sup>11</sup> OJ C 47, 7.2.2023, p. 149.

resilient EU budget fit for new challenges<sup>12</sup>,

- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A9-0321/2023),
- A. whereas humanitarian needs are at an all-time high and are growing at an unprecedented speed, with 339 million people estimated to be in need in 2023 compared to 274 million in 2022;
- B. whereas humanitarian crises are becoming more protracted and complex, and are causing global spillover effects; whereas increasing numbers of conflicts, climate change hazards and their impacts, natural disasters, rising food insecurity, the energy crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have created more economic vulnerability and displacement, resulting in even greater needs; whereas these crises have significantly increased inequalities and have severely disrupted the provision of essential and lifesaving healthcare services; whereas reducing humanitarian needs worldwide can contribute to cutting the risk of violence and to sustaining peace; whereas, however, the main purpose of humanitarian action remains to respond to life-saving needs and to alleviate suffering;
- C. whereas the gap between global humanitarian needs and the resources allocated to meet them continues to widen; whereas in 2022, the funding gap was USD 23 billion, with only 55 % of global needs covered; whereas there is a clear need to involve potential donors with adequate funding capacity; whereas the EU, together with its Member States and the United States account for the vast majority of global funding for humanitarian aid; whereas the EU's humanitarian budget for 2023 has been set at EUR 1.7 billion, which is far from sufficient to continue keeping up with the EU's commitments as one of the world's leading donors; whereas there are striking imbalances in funding between humanitarian appeals, reflecting the fact that more crises are being forgotten; whereas humanitarian aid is unlike other forms of EU expenditure, in that it is life-saving;
- D. whereas there is no universally agreed official definition of a 'forgotten crisis'; whereas the term 'forgotten crisis' is often used to describe humanitarian crises that receive limited attention and media coverage, are often overshadowed by other emergencies or ongoing conflicts, or that fail to generate an international response despite the severity of the situation and its impact on affected populations;
- E. whereas the Commission allocates at least 15 % of its initial annual humanitarian budget to forgotten crises, and has led by example in ensuring there is no diversion of aid in the light of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine; whereas humanitarian budgets around the world, including those of the Member States have, nonetheless, been squeezed as a result of the war;
- F. whereas 83 % of people in need live in countries that have had UN-backed emergency response appeals for at least five consecutive years; whereas almost three quarters of those in humanitarian need live in countries facing at least two of the key causes of

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<sup>12</sup> OJ C 177, 17.5.2023, p. 115.

crises: conflict, climate, or economic fragility<sup>13</sup>;

- G. whereas innovative structural solutions are needed to address global humanitarian challenges and ensure that the humanitarian system is more agile, prepared for and responsive to humanitarian crises, as well as more gender-inclusive, locally-led and accountable; whereas these solutions should focus on ensuring sufficient and quality funding, implementing effectively the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (triple nexus) approach and creating an enabling humanitarian environment for humanitarian workers and organisations; whereas the role and participation of local actors and first responders in humanitarian responses must be recognised and supported; whereas it is estimated that over 40 % of the half a million frontline humanitarian workers are women; whereas efforts to address current and future humanitarian challenges must be guided by a conflict sensitive and people-centred approach that addresses the diverse humanitarian needs of all people and communities, especially with regard to women, children and persons with disabilities, and ensures the protection of their rights under international humanitarian law;
- H. whereas there is an increased sexual and reproductive health (SRH) risk in humanitarian settings, including armed conflicts, which requires specific attention; whereas more than 26 million women and girls of reproductive age worldwide have been forced away from their homes and now live in refugee camps and crises zones, exposing them further to an increased risk of sexual violence;
- I. whereas in fragile and conflict affected settings, the parties to conflicts often fail to comply with their responsibilities and obligations under international humanitarian law, impacting on the protection of civilians and the ability of humanitarian organisations and workers to access and address the needs of those affected, exacerbating and prolonging their humanitarian needs;

### ***Funding***

1. Calls urgently on the Commission and the Member States to substantially increase their humanitarian aid budgets – without compromising their development budgets – to respond to humanitarian needs, which are at a record high; reiterates its call on the Member States to allocate a fixed share of 0.7 % of their gross national incomes to official development assistance (ODA); supports, in this regard, the Council conclusions of 22 May 2023 encouraging the Member States to devote 10 % of their ODA to humanitarian action and calls for their swift implementation, ensuring that allocated funds are utilised efficiently, effectively and with a focus on long- term sustainable solutions in close consultation and cooperation with humanitarian partners; calls on the Member States to set ambitious targets and create roadmaps for gradually increasing ODA to meet the final target of 10 %;
2. Notes that closing the funding gap is a global responsibility; reiterates, therefore, the need to achieve a more balanced funding structure and expand the humanitarian resource base by promoting the greater involvement of non-traditional and emerging donor countries with major economic potential and by mobilising private funding, accompanied by monitoring mechanisms, with full respect for the humanitarian

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<sup>13</sup> [Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2023](#).

principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;

3. Calls on the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, as chair of the Foreign Affairs Council, to advocate against the diversion and reduction of humanitarian aid by the Member States; stresses that expanding the donor base globally will require extensive diplomatic and political efforts by the EU; draws attention to the need to harness the potential of the Member States with less experience in the area of humanitarian aid and development cooperation;
4. Underlines the concerns over the development additionality of blending-guarantee mechanisms as assessed by the European Court of Auditors in the case of the European Fund for Sustainable Development; calls on the Commission and financial institutions, including the European Investment Bank, to ensure that all humanitarian operations undertaken through blending are compliant with the external action goals of the EU as defined in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union, including the respect for and promotion of human rights, the eradication of poverty, and the management of environmental risks; calls on the Commission to provide Parliament with a written assessment on the implementation of the pilot project for blending for humanitarian action, defined in the Commission communication of 10 March 2021, to evaluate the alignment of this financial mechanism with external action objectives;
5. Underlines that the increased role of private sector partnerships, including support for the ‘Global Gateway’ strategy, make access to support for local actors more complex and limit their access to equitable partnerships that leave no one behind; insists that transparency and accountability across EU external actions, and related financial instruments, should be fully guaranteed, including for Team Europe initiatives aimed at providing humanitarian support;
6. Insists on the importance of preserving expertise and non-interference in the neutrality principle of humanitarian actors; stresses that further engagement with the private sector requires prior analysis of results achieved so far through this collaboration, the exclusive promotion of partnerships which comply with international humanitarian principles, environmental, social and human rights standards, and accountability to affected populations;
7. Calls for the revision of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) to include a substantial increase in the humanitarian aid budget to match the new humanitarian landscape and needs, including the specific needs of women and girls; is concerned that the funds earmarked for external crises under the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) were already exhausted in the first quarter of 2023; suggests splitting the SEAR into two separate parts, reflecting the internal and external dimensions, and equipping each part with adequate funding;
8. Underlines that any reinforcement of the SEAR should be complementary to and not substitutive of the humanitarian aid budgetary line; calls for the EU to provide a robust annual budget for EU humanitarian aid to ensure timely, predictable and flexible funding at the beginning of each financial year and to keep a ring-fenced envelope within the SEAR for humanitarian crises outside the Union and to maintain the existing capacity to rapidly mobilise additional funds in the case of emerging, escalating or



sudden emergencies; calls for Parliament and the Council to substantially increase the humanitarian aid instrument in the context of the 2024 annual budget;

9. Is concerned about the imbalances in funding between crises and within sectors and warns of the consequences of chronic underfunding on the most vulnerable; notes that in 2022, only 27.7 % of the humanitarian appeal for El Salvador was funded compared to 94.5 % of the humanitarian appeal for the Central African Republic, reflecting that funding imbalances can result in some appeals receiving as much as three times more funding than others; notes the critical and continuous underfunding of both the protection and gender-based violence areas, which has a strong impact on access to services for people in need; calls for more equitable, needs-based distribution of funding to ensure that no one is left behind; calls on the Commission to develop a more harmonised approach to forgotten crises, and to report on its commitment to allocate 15 % of its initial annual humanitarian budget to forgotten crises and to prevent the transfer of resources from already underfunded crises; calls on the Council to better coordinate the Member States' attention to and support for these crises;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support and implement the G7 foreign ministers statement on anticipatory action and invest an increased part of the humanitarian funding for early warning and anticipatory action; invites the Commission and the Member States to strengthen existing and currently developed early warning systems (for example the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the Famine Early Warning Systems Network and local systems) to enhance and disseminate the evidence base for a political warning and triggering of an adequate government, donor and partner response to prevent IPC 2 level situations deteriorating into IPC 3, 4 or 5 emergencies;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide more quality, predictable funding, especially in protracted crises, through flexible unearmarked, softly earmarked and multiannual funding that is tailored to local contexts, needs-based and people-centred; asks for a reinforcement of multiannual, flexible funding, which is especially critical for resilience-building programmes; emphasises the burden of administrative obstacles faced by humanitarian organisations in raising funds and in regard to reporting requirements, which affects their efficiency and the speed of their response to crises, and stresses the need to reduce it; is concerned that local actors and humanitarian organisations struggle to gain access to finance and raise funds, including pooled funds, due to the burden of bureaucratic impediments and a lack of capacity; considers that local actors should be given maximum flexibility, especially as regards overhead thresholds; calls on the Commission and the Member States to push for a stricter enforcement of the Grand Bargain commitments to increase multi-year funding by 30 % over their own baseline, as well as providing at least 30 % of their funding as flexible or softly earmarked funding; highlights the need to harmonise and simplify donors applications, contracting, grants management and reporting procedures as well as to enable donors to design programmes to support governments and civil society in managing risks and responding to crises; calls the Commission and the Member States to consider the use of special drawing rights to finance humanitarian aid and development cooperation (for low- and middle-income countries);
12. Insists that it is critical to ensure a more locally-led and effective response; underlines

the important role of civil society, humanitarian organisations and local partners in identifying needs and delivering humanitarian aid directly to those in need; calls, however, for enhanced coordination of assistance among NGOs and donors to secure predictability of aid while avoiding either fragmentation of aid or overlapping actions; calls on the Commission and the Member States to enable better access to information, decision-making and coordination mechanisms for local actors and to allocate increased direct funding to NGOs and local actors who are able to use it more efficiently and cost-effectively; calls for greater transparency regarding the recipients and amounts of funding on the DG ECHO website; stresses the need to achieve the global aggregated target set by the Grand Bargain of channelling at least 25 % of humanitarian funding directly to local responder organisations and welcomes the Commission's commitment to achieve it; calls on the Commission and the Member States to monitor and report on the implementation of this commitment on a regular basis;

13. Calls on the EU to reach its target of allocating at least 20 % of ODA to human development as an essential tool to achieve the SDGs, and to adopt targets for gender equality that are quantified in terms of dedicated funding and not just as a percentage of the overall programmes; reiterates its call for the adoption of a gender-sensitive approach to the overall EU budget, to ensure the achievement of SDG 5 on gender equality; calls on EU Delegations and all Member States to prioritise human development in their joint programming;

### *The triple nexus*

14. Notes that the triple nexus is key to addressing the underlying causes and context-specific needs in complex and protracted crises and to building resilience to future crises, in order to improve the coherence and complementarity of responses and to better link short- and long-term support mechanisms, in line with humanitarian principles, and that it plays a pivotal role in stabilising the situation in crisis countries and in building international security; stresses that poverty, conflict, instability and forced displacement are closely related phenomena that must be addressed in a coherent and comprehensive manner; insists on more nexus-specific funding, transparency, visibility, coordination and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders when applying the triple nexus approach, including through better involvement of local actors;
15. Is concerned that less development funding is being made available to help countries transition from humanitarian aid; notes that, globally, development assistance as a proportion of total ODA to countries in long-term crisis fell from 50 % to 48 % over the five years to 2021, while the proportion of humanitarian assistance rose to 41 % from an average of 37 %<sup>14</sup>;
16. Calls on the Commission to ensure the effective implementation of the triple nexus across its policies and structures and to regularly report on its implementation; calls for the promotion of more joint assessments, analysis and planning across different funding instruments, especially at country level; notes the potential of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation – Global Europe instrument (NDICI-GE) to put the triple nexus approach into practice; calls for better coordination between the Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), DG

<sup>14</sup> <https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2023/>.

ECHO and the European External Action Service in implementing the rapid response pillar of NDICI-GE, in order to ensure that their responses complement one another;

17. Calls on the Commission to respond to and implement the recommendations of the INTPA-commissioned study on the humanitarian-development-Peace (HDP) nexus entitled 'HDP nexus: challenges and opportunities for its implementation', particularly the recommendation to monitor the implementation of the nexus across the relevant services;
18. Invites the Member States to work with the Commission to identify objectives and benchmarks for regional contexts in order to guide the future implementation of the triple nexus until the end of this MFF;
19. Stresses that protracted crises are still humanitarian contexts, and that a substantial share of nexus funding is channelled through development envelopes which cannot provide the same flexibility as humanitarian support in the allocation of funding; calls for the EU and its Member States to envisage concrete solutions for the effective allocation of funding for partners operating in these contexts;

### *Climate justice*

20. Calls for climate funding to be scaled up in order to prevent, mitigate and respond to the alarming impact of climate change on humanitarian crises; is concerned that NDICI-GE expenditure with a climate objective falls far short of the commitment that such expenditure should represent 30 % of NDICI-GE's overall financial envelope; calls on the Commission to scale this up without delay, focusing in particular on climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction in least developed countries; recalls that developed countries committed to a collective goal of mobilising USD 100 billion per year for climate action in developing countries at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in 2009, and that this commitment was renewed at the COP27 in Sharm-el-Sheikh in 2022; calls for the EU to contribute its fair share to this goal and to leverage all its diplomatic means to encourage all developed countries to do the same;
21. Underlines that the effects of climate change are dramatically increasing humanitarian needs in developing countries; stresses the need to localise disaster risk reduction climate preparedness, adaptation and response and to build the capacities of local actors and communities to limit the adverse effects of the humanitarian impact of climate change and ensure the climate resilience of the most vulnerable groups; calls on the Commission to identify the best ways to reach communities living in the most insecure and fragile environments, in particular through locally-led adaptation measures; underlines the importance of involving indigenous people and local communities in localisation; calls on the Commission to ensure political, financial and technical support for civil society organisations delivering community-based services, thereby ensuring that the most vulnerable are reached by tailored and appropriate services;
22. Calls for donors and Member States to adopt and implement the humanitarian aid donors' declaration on climate and the environment by increasing their funding for disaster prevention, preparedness, anticipatory action, and response; calls for humanitarian actors to sign and implement the Climate and Environment Charter for

Humanitarian Organisations, to maximise the environmental sustainability of their work;

23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to reinforce the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (Loss and Damage Mechanism), to better address loss and damage associated with the impacts of climate change;
24. Encourages multi-stakeholder efforts to implement a greener and digitalised humanitarian response; highlights the cost-effectiveness of anticipatory action; calls for a human-centred approach to digitalisation and the responsible use of sensible digital tools; calls for the further enhancement of digital tools' potential to manage huge volumes of complex humanitarian data and accelerate the detection and prediction of climate disasters;

### ***People-centred approach***

25. Stresses the importance of building human resilience by enhancing protection, minimising the risks people face in a crisis and by ensuring the full respect of their rights while guaranteeing access to education and essential health services; calls for efforts to enhance local and sustainable agricultural and food production by promoting agro-ecological methods and sustainable fisheries to increase food availability and prevent dependence on external supplies in times of humanitarian crises; emphasises the need to meaningfully involve the affected people and local communities along with local and national humanitarian actors in coordination structures, in implementing early warning systems, guaranteeing their ability to take action in advance of disasters, conducting needs assessments and determining and monitoring the humanitarian response;
26. Highlights the role and importance of local formal and informal civil society organisations in the humanitarian response; calls on the Commission and the Member States to guarantee their inclusion and participation in all processes in line with the Commission's Guidelines on promoting equitable partnerships with local responders in humanitarian settings;
27. Asks the Commission to better assess, address and monitor the needs and the effective access to humanitarian assistance of the most vulnerable groups, including minorities, children, women, the elderly, local communities, indigenous people and particularly persons with disabilities and intersectional vulnerabilities, in order to ensure that EU's humanitarian policy leaves no one behind; underlines the challenges that those groups and minorities face when accessing humanitarian assistance due to marginalisation, active targeting on the ground or their weak socio-economic position; encourages the use of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's disability marker to track the progress made in humanitarian action; calls on the Commission support the European External Action Service in updating the EU guidelines on children and armed conflict and ensure their implementation;
28. Asks the Commission to strengthen the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 to ensure that the requirements of persons with disabilities are effectively addressed in EU-funded humanitarian aid, which should include the

collection of disaggregated data about persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts, promoting the use of the Washington Group Short Set of questions; asks the Commission to consult civil society and the organisations representing persons with disabilities at all stages of the preparation of the strategy, recalls that in order to be effective, these objectives need to be addressed – and specific budgets allocated – at the very beginning of all planning and decision-making;

29. Strongly supports the Commission's initiative of integrating education in emergencies; emphasises the need for increased humanitarian and development assistance to support child protection, quality education and training at all levels, including in crisis situations, to prevent children and young people from dropping out of school, ensuring access to basic healthcare services and prospects for productive employment in small and weak economies, especially in cases of long-lasting conflicts; highlights the problem of so-called 'lost generations', which is particularly prevalent in the case of forgotten crises;
30. Notes that the number of forcibly displaced persons worldwide is at a record high; calls for the EU and the global community to support and ensure equal and effective access to essential services and humanitarian assistance to refugees, internally displaced people and their host communities, including hard-to-reach groups, those in remote locations and those forced to flee due to the impact of climate change, irrespective of their legal status, and to work for durable solutions, in particular in forgotten crises; calls on the Commission and the Member States to report on and reiterate the commitments made under the Global Compact for Refugees to ensure that the global responsibility to host refugees is shared more fairly; recognises that durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced people must ensure long-term safety and security, access to employment and adequate living standards, to essential public services, and to effective remedies and justice;
31. Underlines that existing structural gender inequalities are exacerbated during crises and that therefore, women and girls, as well as the most marginalised groups that suffer different and intersecting forms of discrimination – such as people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ or elderly people are disproportionately affected by conflicts, natural disasters or climate change hazards; underlines that the specific needs and rights of these groups should be addressed in all humanitarian responses; reiterates the need for the appropriate and timely SRH services to be prioritised and made available in the immediate humanitarian response;
32. Calls for the EU and the Member States to take decisive and positive action on gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action, given that women and girls are the most likely victims of conflicts and natural disasters but also agents of change, to ensure that humanitarian interventions across all sectors are truly needs-based and gender transformative, and support the meaningful participation of women's organisations, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response, in line with the Grand Bargain commitments; calls on the Commission to ensure that women's equal participation and empowerment is integrated explicitly into future humanitarian mechanisms; underlines the need to accelerate the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan III across all of the EU's external action; deplores the increase in gender-based violence in humanitarian settings and stresses the need to prevent it; recalls that,

in accordance with the ‘do no harm’ principle, humanitarian actors in all sectors have a responsibility to design and implement their programming in a way that minimises the risks of gender-based violence; calls on the Commission to assess past experiences in humanitarian sectoral support for gender equality, as well as to introduce specific expenditure, programmes, tracking and assessment methods oriented towards gender-related activities; stresses the importance of improving the collection and reporting of data on gender-related funding, especially where funding supports gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action;

### ***Enabling environment***

33. Insists on the need to reinforce the centrality of and respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law and humanitarian principles in the EU’s external action; invites the Commission to develop a humanitarian diplomacy strategy together with the Member States, ensuring a more systematic and coordinated approach to humanitarian diplomacy, and for this strategy to advocate for the protection of civilians, compliance with international humanitarian law and respect for humanitarian principles; recognises the urgent need for humanitarian workers to access affected populations in conflict zones in order to guarantee that efforts to deliver humanitarian aid are not limited by restrictive measures and bureaucratic impediments;
34. Strongly condemns war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law; calls for all perpetrators to be held accountable and for victims to receive reparations; draws attention to the need to make appropriate use of existing documentation in order to effectively bring perpetrators to justice; invites the Commission to assess the possibility of setting up an EU framework to compensate victims for breaches of international humanitarian law; deplores the rise in attacks on civilians, humanitarian and medical personnel and critical infrastructure, including hospitals and schools worldwide, and insists on the need to increase protection and security measures for civilians, humanitarian and medical workers, and for critical infrastructure, and to design specific measures to protect female humanitarian workers to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse; condemns discriminatory policies, such as the ban on female humanitarian workers in Afghanistan;
35. Welcomes the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2664 (2022) introducing a humanitarian exemption in UN sanction regimes; calls for the EU and the Member States to further align with the global standard set by UN Security Council Resolution 2664; calls on the Commission to carry out an analysis of the impact of sanctions on the delivery of humanitarian aid and to adopt standing humanitarian exemptions in its autonomous sanction regimes in order to ensure humanitarian assistance and support for basic human needs in contexts affected by armed conflict, as required by international humanitarian law; insists, furthermore, on the need to include a permanent humanitarian exemption in the future directive on the definition of criminal offences and penalties for the violation of Union restrictive measures in order to ensure that humanitarian activities are not criminalised under EU sanction regimes and that humanitarian workers are protected in the contexts where EU sanctions apply; calls on the Commission to work closely with financial institutions and humanitarian actors to ensure that administrative barriers, including de-risking over compliance, are addressed to enable the delivery of humanitarian aid; calls on the Commission and the Member States to



include international humanitarian law violations as a criterion for listing individuals or entities in the relevant EU sanction regimes and to vigorously prosecute and sanction those who use starvation as a weapon of war;

36. Calls on the Commission to establish a European Centre for Humanitarian Research and Innovation, bringing together experts from academia and practitioners to foster innovation in the humanitarian sector, notably on access to new sources of finance;
37. Praises the role that local and national organisations and first responders play in humanitarian responses and assisting those with the most acute needs; underlines the importance of collaborating with and supporting local actors to enhance their capacity for action in conflict-affected areas, while also providing adequate training and protection to humanitarian staff and boosting the participation of affected communities in addressing humanitarian needs in line with the Grand Bargain commitment to making principled humanitarian action as local as possible; points out that all humanitarian workers involved in conflict situations, regardless of their nationality or country of origin, must be entitled to equal protection and support during evacuation operations and that no distinction must be made based on the workers' origin or any other discriminatory factors; welcomes the Commission guidance note on equitable partnerships and DG ECHO's commitment to advance the localisation agenda in the Grand Bargain discussions; calls on all humanitarian actors to promote more equitable partnerships, in particular with organisations representing the most marginalised crisis-affected people; calls on the Commission and the Member States to deliver fully and meaningfully on the commitments enshrined in the guidance note, ensuring accountability and proper support for partners as well as the fair sharing of risks with intermediaries and local partner organisations;

### ***Role of media***

38. Stresses that EU humanitarian action needs to be more recognisable as such; underlines the critical role of media in raising awareness of crises and generating public support for crisis response; encourages media organisations to ensure accurate and timely reporting on crises and to dedicate resources to in-depth reporting, which includes providing journalists with access to affected areas, facilitating interviews with affected populations and supporting investigative journalism in uncovering the underlying causes and dynamics of crises;
39. Recognises that media organisations bear some responsibility for contributing to forgotten crises through their selective coverage and inadequate follow-up reporting; emphasises that media organisations should not abandon coverage of conflicts, even if they are deemed 'prolonged' or 'forgotten', as continued reporting is essential for keeping the international community informed, maintaining pressure on relevant stakeholders and supporting efforts towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding; strongly encourages media outlets to reflect on their role and actively address this issue by prioritising sustained and comprehensive reporting on all humanitarian crises, irrespective of their duration or geographical location, to ensure the voices of the affected populations are heard; encourages initiatives and projects that aim to broaden public awareness of forgotten crises and mobilise donors to bring more aid to these areas; calls on the Commission to propose a media strategy for shining the spotlight on

forgotten crises, which should include publishing sponsored articles and posts in print, online and social media, as well as organising scholarships and training for journalists;

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40. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service.



## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The numbers do not lie. With every passing minute, more people find themselves vulnerable and in need of humanitarian aid. With every passing second, the gap between resources available and resources needed grows wider, despite increased efforts by many actors, agencies, institutions, companies, countries and the European Union in particular.

This trend must be reversed. We need more and better preventive action and increased capacity to respond to emergencies. Those challenges cannot be met by minor adjustments to governance or communication. We need innovation and inclusion, and the focus must be on people, especially preventing and mitigating their suffering.

The aim of this own-initiative report is to provide a solid contribution towards building an innovative humanitarian aid strategy and to ensure crises are addressed because they are serious and not just for their political or media visibility. It is important not to let crises go forgotten or leave vulnerable people deprived of the support they need.

As a European Parliament report, it was drawn up after hearing actors on the ground, funders and policymakers; it draws on their experience, knowledge, practices and reflections on the transformation and implementation challenges that we need to tackle and overcome.

As rapporteur, I took a holistic approach based on strategically linking three areas: funding, capacity to deliver and resilience building.

With this approach, which includes gender mainstreaming and a special note on persons with disabilities, I have attempted to address two constraints that tend to make action less efficient, effective and extensive.

Funding for measures that are not properly delivered or associated with improved resilience is in part lost due to systemic entropy processes that need mitigation. Furthermore, creating structural resilience is impossible without adequate funding, delivery and the promotion of co-creation processes in community-based plans.

The report's five chapters set out the mechanisms for deploying and innovatively combining efforts and policies to overcome those two constraints. Each chapter was drawn up through a cross analysis of historical and statistical information and the outcome of the hearings and exchanges of views organised and validated experiences.

There is no magic solution or silver bullet to resolve the identified shortcomings. The 'valley of death' of humanitarian aid needs to be bridged by increasing available resources and making the process to conclude contracts and use those resources more agile and flexible; moreover, it involves enhancing the resilience of people and territories to develop decent, feasible solutions to mitigate and adapt to extreme conditions, such as those caused by climate change, which poses so many challenges today.

The process can only succeed with a coordinated effort by all actors in the aid ecosystem at every level of the process, as part of a humanitarian working environment that is safe and effective, supported by solid humanitarian diplomacy. That environment must allow actors to really get on the ground and reach people who need and rely on humanitarian aid, ensuring

humanitarian actors will act with neutrality, particularly with regard to political or religious affiliations, and that experiences and best practices are shared and disseminated.

With more than 400 million people in need of emergency humanitarian aid to survive – and that number is spiralling upwards – short-term responses must remain a priority. However, I propose that measures be designed in a way that lays the groundwork for long-term solutions, particularly by investing in education, physical and mental health, security and basic infrastructure conditions implemented in a context of community-based governance.

Throughout the report, I express my belief that good solutions are only possible with more and better funding, greater capacity to deliver and greater commitment to the future.

We need to do more and do better, taking a holistic view of people in their context and using participatory strategies wherever possible to involve everyone in designing solutions, empower donors, actors and beneficiaries, build foundations, sow hope and reap results.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	24.10.2023
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ : 15 - : 0 0 : 2
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Barry Andrews, Dominique Bilde, Catherine Chabaud, Antoni Comín i Oliveres, Mónica Silvana González, Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Beata Kempa, Karsten Lucke, Eleni Stavrou, Tomas Tobé, Miguel Urbán Crespo
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Ilan De Basso, Marlene Mortler, Carlos Zorrinho
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

15	+
NI	Antoni Comín i Oliveres
PPE	Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Marlene Mortler, Eleni Stavrou, Tomas Tobé
Renew	Barry Andrews, Catherine Chabaud
S&D	Ilan De Basso, Mónica Silvana González, Karsten Lucke, Carlos Zorrinho
The Left	Miguel Urbán Crespo
Verts/ALE	Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana

0	-

2	0
ECR	Beata Kempa
ID	Dominique Bilde

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention