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**Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - (ECHO)
Annual Report 2005**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) is responsible for providing humanitarian assistance to victims of conflicts or disasters, both natural and man-made, in countries outside the European Union. Its mandate is to save and preserve life, reduce or prevent suffering and safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations of non-EU countries hit by humanitarian crises¹. DG ECHO is committed to providing this assistance solely on the basis of needs and is not to be swayed by political considerations.

In humanitarian terms, 2005 proved particularly heavy with a succession of major natural disasters which came in addition to the existing humanitarian crises some of which e.g. Darfur characterised by a worsening of the humanitarian situation. It started with the immediate aftermath of the tsunami of December 2004, one of the most important disasters for a century, which affected 12 countries on the shore of the Indian Ocean, followed by the drought in Sub-Saharan Africa, a violent season of hurricanes in Central America and, finally, the earthquake in Pakistan of October 2005.

However, thousands more died in other crises all over the world, often without the public being aware of their plight. These are what the European Commission calls "forgotten crises", crises which are not – or are no longer – covered by the media and whose victims receive little assistance. One of DG ECHO's objectives is to alleviate the suffering of the victims of these crises, which are most of the time protracted crises.

Generally, natural and man-made disasters have affected increasing numbers of people throughout the world. The number and intensity of natural disasters has increased, as well as their number of victims and, according to forecasts, this trend will continue. In parallel, conflicts tend to last longer and are increasingly destructive even if the number of refugees' flows is decreasing.

In parallel to focusing on evolving global humanitarian needs, DG ECHO continued to pay special attention to cross-cutting issues such as the link between emergency and development aid (LRRD²), disaster preparedness, HIV/AIDS, water and children.

This report sums up DG ECHO's main activities in 2005. The annex provides more detailed information, including a country-by-country overview of humanitarian operations supported by DG ECHO.

2. GENERAL POLICY ASPECTS

Beyond the humanitarian operations, the experience of recent crises such as the tsunami (December 2004) and the earthquake in Pakistan (October 2005) stimulated a reflection at international level on improving the response capacity of the humanitarian system as a whole. The international response has demonstrated that the present system does not always ensure that the basic needs of affected populations are met in a timely way. It has also confirmed the

¹ Council Regulation N° 1257 of 20 June 1996

² Linking relief, rehabilitation and development

emergence of new actors on the humanitarian scene, such as Member States' civil protection units or the military whose logistical capabilities proved essential during emergency relief operations.

As a result of this process, a series of humanitarian reforms of the UN system aimed at improving the predictability, timeliness, and effectiveness of the humanitarian response have been endorsed by the UN system including by the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC³ and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. The reform programme includes components such as strengthening humanitarian response capacity, strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator System and ensuring predictable funding.

DG ECHO remained vigilant and active throughout 2005 to make sure that the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence remained high on the agenda both within the EU institutions and in international fora. This was reflected in EU endorsed post-Tsunami action plan on the strengthening of EU disaster response capacity which maintains that EU relief operations must respect humanitarian principles.

DG ECHO continued also in 2005 to follow the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative and attended several technical meetings of the Implementation Group in Geneva and London. In 2005, work on the GHD focused on benchmarks/indicators, peer reviews and OECD/DAC and harmonisation of reporting requirements. In July 2005, DG ECHO attended a high level meeting in New York hosted by the Government of Canada to take stock of progress made on the Stockholm Implementation Plan. In the margins of the 2005 Humanitarian Segment of the UN ECOSOC, DG ECHO also participated in a Panel Discussion on “Good Humanitarian Donorship – Assessing Progress Two Years On”.

Finally, DG ECHO is also dealing with sectoral and transversal priorities and encourages – whenever possible and relevant – a transition process towards development activities (LRRD), condition for a successful exit strategy. In this context, DG ECHO phased out its operations in Angola and handed over to development actors in Tajikistan and Cambodia, with the intention of fully withdrawing in 2006. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, DG ECHO was able to hand over its activities in some areas to DG DEV and to the World Bank, allowing it to focus on the most vulnerable and troubled areas in the east of the country.

Regarding **children**, work continued in 2005 on policy guidelines on children affected by humanitarian crises. These guidelines will be finalised in 2006. In 2005, 42 contracts focused on child-related activities (e.g. therapeutic feeding, vaccination, reintegration of child soldiers) for a total amount of EUR 30 million. In addition, numerous other contracts have a multi-beneficiary dimension but contain a part specifically targeted to children.

At the end of 2005, a review and guidelines on **water and sanitation** in emergencies were published on DG ECHO's website. They have been presented to its main partners and have been well received.

³ UN Economic and Social Council

3. OVERVIEW OF DG ECHO'S HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

3.1. Allocation of funds

DG ECHO's response to humanitarian emergencies evolved in line with the changes in global humanitarian needs in 2005, as reflected in the regional distribution of the DG's funding patterns, with a particular focus on the "forgotten crises". To ensure that DG ECHO's operations are driven by needs, DG ECHO's work programme is based on a global needs assessment (GNA) methodology. This provides a general cross-country assessment comparing the situation across more than 130 developing countries, on the basis of indicators (human development, human poverty, natural disaster risk, conflicts, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), under-five malnutrition and mortality and other donors' contributions).

The results of this assessment can be found on the Europa website http://ec.europa.eu/comm/echo/information/strategy/index_fr.htm.

DG ECHO's response to humanitarian crises in 2005 was channelled through 91 funding decisions amounting to EUR 652.5 million: EUR 629.33 million was financed from the Commission's budget and EUR 23.2 million was drawn from the EDF. The implementation of the commitment appropriations was 100%. ACP countries were the biggest recipients of aid (EUR 244.2 million), followed closely by Asia (EUR 239.25 million – tsunami operations included). The table below gives an overview of the geographical distribution of the humanitarian aid decisions adopted in 2005 (amounts in million euros):

Unit/Region	Amount in million EUR	
ECHO -1: Africa, Caribbean, Pacific	244,217	37%
<i>Horn of Africa</i> ⁴	85,120	13%
<i>Great Lakes</i>	71,000	11%
<i>West Africa</i>	52,550	8%
<i>Caribbean, Pacific, Indian Ocean</i>	8,297	1%
<i>Southern Africa</i>	27,250	4%
ECHO -2: Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Southern Caucasus, Central Asia (including Mongolia), Middle East, Mediterranean	84,087	13%
<i>Russian Federation, Southern Caucasus and Central Asia (including Mongolia)</i>	35,200	6%
<i>Mediterranean countries</i>	9,311	1%
<i>Middle East</i>	39,576	6%

⁴ ECHO-Flight operations included

ECHO -3: Asia, Central and South America	256,945	40%
<i>Asia (including tsunami EUR 122,83)</i>	<i>239,245</i>	<i>37%</i>
<i>Central and South America</i>	<i>17,700</i>	<i>3%</i>
Dipecho - Disaster preparedness⁵	17,500	3%
Thematic funding	20,500	3%
Technical assistance (experts and imprest accounts)	22,750	3%
Support expenditure (audits, evaluation, information and communication, etc.)	6,500	1%
TOTAL 2005	652,499	100%

Following the GNA classification, the top 25% of countries on the list are ranked as those with the greatest needs, the 50% in the middle are rated as medium-need countries and the remaining 25% as low-need countries. This classification allows DG ECHO to verify, from a global point of view, how successfully its needs-based strategy is implemented.

Applying this methodology to the 2005 results (at 31 December 2005), 48% (or EUR 312 million) of the EUR 652.5 million⁶ committed from Chapter 23 02 of the budget and the EDF were allocated to areas with the greatest needs, 21% (or EUR 136.8 million) to areas with medium needs and 1.0% (or EUR 6.9 million) to low-need areas ("pockets of need"). The rest (EUR 196.6 million or 30%) was spent on tsunami response activities (EUR 122.83 million), disaster preparedness activities ("DIPECHO" programme), thematic funding, technical assistance and support expenditure.

DG ECHO's aid strategy continued to focus on forgotten crises. This relates to situations where major humanitarian needs receive little attention on the part of donors - reflected by the level of aid received - and the media. DG ECHO's analysis and methodology for identifying forgotten crises is based on both quantitative data (lack of media coverage or low donor support combined with high needs) and qualitative factors (field assessment by DG ECHO experts and desk officers). The forgotten crises identified in 2005 were: Algeria (Western Sahara), Indonesia, Myanmar/Thailand, Nepal, Northern Caucasus (Chechnya), Tajikistan, Somalia and Uganda. In the course of the year support amounting to EUR 89.1 million was allocated to these crises, which represents 13.6% of the EUR 652.5 million total committed from Chapter 23 02 of the budget and the EDF and 20% of the amounts committed for geographical decisions (EUR 462.4 million), tsunami excluded.

⁵ See Dipecho distribution by region in annex under point II.4

⁶ Without the tsunami response activities, the total of commitments becomes EUR 529.7 million, of which 59% to areas with the greatest needs, 21% to areas with medium needs and 1% to low-needs areas. The rest becomes EUR 73.8 million or 14% and was spent on disaster preparedness activities ("DIPECHO" programme), thematic funding, technical assistance and support expenditure.

3.2. Main interventions in 2005, by region

Details of these interventions are available in annex – part I.

3.2.1. Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP countries)

In 2005, DG ECHO allocated EUR 244 million to ACP countries. The most important actions took place in:

- Sudan: the peace process initiated in January 2005 after 20 years of conflict between the North and the South was not extended to Darfur, where the situation became even more chaotic and volatile. Darfur is the biggest open conflict on the African continent. The number of people affected by the conflict and in need of assistance continued to increase, reaching half the population of Darfur region. The initial allocation of EUR 20 million was rapidly absorbed and several budgetary reinforcements were requested during the year, reaching a total amount of EUR 45 million, to which EUR 12 million allocated to Sudanese refugees in Chad must be added.
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with a total aid of EUR 38 million. The East of the country (Ituri, Kivu and Katanga) continued to suffer from insecurity despite a relative improvement due to a more aggressive deployment of United Nations forces. In 2005 displaced, resettling and host families received an integrated package of community-based assistance designed to respond to immediate needs while paving the way for a rapid return to productive activity and thus contributing to the stabilisation of conflict-affected areas.
- Coastal West Africa (Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire): the budget allocated in 2005 (EUR 29.2 million) was dedicated to the large population of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were assisted in their return to normality.
- Niger and Mali: DG ECHO quickly allocated EUR 8.3 million to respond to the sudden nutritional crises in 2005 in Niger and Mali. Priority was given to the operation of emergency feeding centres and improved access to primary health care for the most vulnerable population.

3.2.2. Russian Federation

As for the Northern Caucasus, no durable peace settlement was in sight and the consequences of the unresolved conflict in Chechnya were felt in the whole region, where violence spread over the year. The basic needs of the population, after more than five years of conflict, continued to be largely neglected by the international community. This forgotten humanitarian crisis remained one of DG ECHO's operational priorities, with funding amounting to EUR 26.3 million.

3.2.3. Mediterranean and Middle-East

Significant financial assistance continued to be provided to support the Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon (EUR 36.6 million) in view of their dire humanitarian situation and the absence of a political settlement of the conflict, as well as to Sahrawi refugees in Algeria who remain entirely dependent on humanitarian aid (EUR 9.3 million).

3.2.4. *Asia*

Since the tsunami occurred in the last days of 2004, with emergency decisions taken in the following days, almost all of the activities took place in 2005. The bulk of operations took place in Indonesia and Sri Lanka with smaller operations in India, the Maldives and Thailand. Commission procedures enabled a rapid response to the tsunami, granting EUR 3 million the same day as the disaster, followed by a further EUR 20 million within five days. An additional EUR 80 million was granted in February 2005, followed by EUR 20 million in December 2005, making a total of EUR 123 million. The high level of funding proved appropriate particularly due to the longer than expected transition from the relief phase to the reconstruction phase⁷.

In October 2005, a devastating earthquake struck Pakistan and India, killing 75,000 people⁸. A primary emergency aid of EUR 3 million was allocated two days after the disaster and additional funds (EUR 10 million) were mobilised 4 days later, in particular from the European Commission's emergency reserve. DG ECHO was able to allocate a total of EUR 48 million before the end of the year.

DG ECHO mobilised EUR 20 million for victims of the Afghan crisis, covering the registration and transport of refugees from Pakistan and Iran to Afghanistan; shelter, water and sanitation for the most needy within Afghanistan; as well as continuing support for the most vulnerable of the remaining refugees.

In North Korea, DG ECHO continued in 2005 to be significantly involved, with financial support of EUR 13.7 million for health, water and sanitation and to provide vital medical supplies.

3.2.5. *Latin America*

The main intervention took place in Colombia where EUR 12 million were allocated to support people affected by violence. In the first eight months of 2005, over 39,000 people received food and non-food items during the first three months after their displacement. Subsequent to this emergency phase, over 70 000 IDPs, blocked and confined communities and vulnerable host communities received assistance in the form of non-food items, access to safe drinking water, primary healthcare, plus educational facilities for children and psychosocial assistance.

3.3. **Disaster preparedness activities (DIPECHO)**

As foreseen in the Regulation n° 1257/96, under its article 2f, DG ECHO supports disaster preparedness activities in several regions of the world prone to natural disasters, in order to help populations to react rapidly in case of new disaster and thus, to save lives. The huge disasters that affected the world population in 2005 have demonstrated the value of such actions.

Disaster preparedness activities are mostly implemented in countries where DG ECHO already supports humanitarian actions but DIPECHO projects can also be the sole presence of

⁷ Special Report No 3/2006 concerning the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Response to the Tsunami (pursuant to Article 248(4), second subparagraph, EC) together with the Commission's replies.

⁸ USAID Factsheet – 24th February 2006 <http://www.usaid.gov/press/factsheets/2006/fs060227.html>

DG ECHO in the field, as in Vietnam, Nicaragua or the Andean countries in 2005. Under its DIPECHO programme, DG ECHO adopted in 2005 action plans for the Andean Community, Central Asia, South Asia and the Caribbean, for a total amount of EUR 17.5 million. These regions were chosen because of their high risk of natural disasters and the high vulnerability of the populations while also taking into consideration the lack of local resources and coping capacities.

Moreover, a disaster preparedness component has also been included more systematically in the humanitarian response to natural disasters. This was for example the case for decisions taken to support the victims of the tsunami, the Pakistani earthquake or the hurricanes in the Caribbean region.

3.4. Main partners in the humanitarian operations

The humanitarian aid provided by DG ECHO is implemented through partners. DG ECHO works with about 200 non-governmental organisations, United Nations agencies and international organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies.

Having a diverse range of partners is important for DG ECHO. It allows the efficient coverage of an increasing list of needs all over the world. DG ECHO has developed increasingly close working relationships with its partners at the level of both policy issues and management of humanitarian operations.

In 2005, DG ECHO implemented its operations mainly through NGOs (54%), United Nations agencies (32%) and International organisations (11%). For more details on the yearly repartition between families of partners, see annex points II.5 and II.6.

Finally, a Grant Facility is established annually to promote a better collaboration with NGO partners and to reinforce their capacities. It corresponds to a number of priorities identified by DG ECHO and aims at allocating small grants for training initiatives or studies. It also contributes to the understanding of humanitarian issues and to the development of appropriate policy responses. After a call for proposal, grants were awarded in August 2005 for a total amount of EUR 500,000. The four projects selected aimed at improving the administrative capacity of humanitarian NGOs as well as the quality of operations planning, design and implementation.

4. RELATIONS WITH OTHER EU INSTITUTIONS, MEMBER STATES, MAJOR HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS AND NON-EU DONORS

4.1. EU Institutions and Member States

In 2005, DG ECHO continued to be active at the EU level with a view to ensuring that the humanitarian principles remained high on the agenda within the EU institutions.

DG for Humanitarian Aid also maintained close contacts with other Commission services (DG External Relations, DG Development, EuropeAid Co-operation Office and DG Environment) in order to ensure the coherence of the overall Community response. Moreover, DG ECHO has participated in different meetings and Council working groups to explain its specific mandate and its relations with other EU instruments involved in emergency responses.

An EU Action Plan was adopted - after the tsunami - initiating a process of further developing its disaster response capacity. The EU Action Plan identified possible measures - including a better use of existing instruments that could be developed - to deal with disasters inside and outside the EU. DG ECHO contributed to the Commission Communication on “*Reinforcing the EU disaster and crisis response in third countries*” adopted in response to this Action Plan (20 April 2005)⁹. In this Communication, DG ECHO identified a number of measures aimed at reinforcing the delivery and the coherence of EU humanitarian response to disasters outside the EU, such as (1) increasing the number of field-based experts; (2) training experts in the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs’ (OCHA), United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the Red Cross’ FACT¹⁰ assessment and coordination methodologies (this is in order to develop synergies and cross-fertilisation of ideas when conducting needs assessments); finally, (3) developing a surge capacity pre-positioned at the level of DG ECHO regional field offices, allowing deployment of emergency specialised multi-sectoral teams within 24 hours.

The Commission has appointed two representatives to the **Civil – Military Cell** based in the EU Military Staff (EUMS) in the Council Secretariat. DG ECHO maintains close relations with this newly created body to ensure that the humanitarian principles and the UN guidelines are appropriately reflected in work of the cell and, in particular, any relevant strategic planning scenarios developed by the Cell.

DG ECHO also contributed to the elaboration of the humanitarian component of a crisis management scenario. DG ECHO considered this as an opportunity to recall that it is not a crisis management tool; its action is not subject to any political considerations but it is driven only by the needs of the victims of natural or man-made disasters in accordance with the humanitarian principles and International Humanitarian Law.

Finally, eight meetings of the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC) with representatives from the Member States were held in 2005. In addition, the Luxemburg and British presidencies convened two informal HAC meetings, to discuss international humanitarian law and humanitarian reform, respectively.

4.2. Relations with international organisations and non-EU major donors

As already evoked in the general policy aspects, the international response to humanitarian emergencies has demonstrated over the past few years that the present system allows a response which varies from crisis to crisis and in major crises, existing capacity levels are often insufficient to meet even key needs in an adequate manner. 2005 was a stimulating year of in-depth reflection on a possible reform agenda for the international humanitarian system.

The UN Secretary General presented a report entitled “In Larger Freedom” in March 2005. So far as humanitarian aid was concerned, the report stated that a system upgrade was necessary in 3 key areas: more predictable and timely funding of operational UN agencies and their NGO implementing partners in undertaking emergency activities, strengthened coordination both at the field and HQ level and strengthened response capacity, including clearer sectoral responsibility and accountability.

⁹ COM (2005) 153 final.

¹⁰ <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/fact/>

Throughout 2005, DG ECHO closely followed all these developments. It attended meetings related to the humanitarian reform and provided input to the different initiatives discussed.

In December 2005, Commissioner Michel was invited to attend the meeting of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. Commissioner Michel met with the heads of all UN operational organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Organization for Migration as well as with the representatives of non governmental organisations. Commissioner Michel shared with IASC members the Commission's views on the reform of the humanitarian system.

In the framework of the annual Strategic Programming Dialogue (SPD), meetings were held in 2005 with major partners (OCHA, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, ICRC, IFRC, UNHCR, VOICE and MSF) to discuss the strategies and main priorities of each organisation.

In order to draw the first lessons from the tsunami response, DG ECHO participated in the "Six Months after the Tsunami: Stocktaking by the EU and the UN " which was organised by the EU Presidency (Luxemburg) and UN OCHA.

DG ECHO was also involved in various meetings to discuss in depth with other major donors issues such as the humanitarian principles or the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in humanitarian operations.

Concerning its relations with non-EU major donors, DG ECHO continued its dialogue with the US administration to co-ordinate humanitarian policies/responses and raise mutual concerns on humanitarian developments in current crisis situations. The annual ECHO/US Strategic Dialogue meeting continued.

A joint mission with the US to Liberia and Guinea took place in the first quarter to monitor the voluntary return of Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes. Joint recommendations of the mission on "Coordination, Repatriation, IDPs, Food situation, and Transition" were jointly handed over to UNHCR, OCHA, and WFP as well as to Humanitarian coordinator in Liberia.

DG ECHO met also representatives of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to explore possible future cooperation.

4.3. Thematic funding

Given the central role played by the main international humanitarian agencies (UN and Red Cross Movement) in the effective delivery of humanitarian aid, DG ECHO continued to support the reinforcement of their institutional capacities through thematic funding programmes.

In 2005 DG ECHO financially supported the development of information systems by **UN OCHA** (EUR 4 million), including the deployment of Humanitarian Information Centres (e.g. Sri Lanka, Aceh, Niger, Pakistan), ReliefWeb and the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS); the reinforcement of **WHO's** capacity to respond to health emergencies (EUR 4 million); protection activities for victims of armed conflict by **ICRC** (EUR 4 million)

(e.g. Central Africa Republic, Republic of Congo, Rwanda Azerbaijan, Philippines and Pakistan), and a **UNHCR** protection programme (EUR 5 million). Thematic funding also contributed to the **IFRC** disaster management programme (EUR 3.5 million). Projects on child protection (EUR 2 million) and disaster preparedness (EUR 5.7 million) managed by **UNICEF** were also implemented in 2005 with funds from the previous year.

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES

5.1. Experts in the field

The EU action plan on the reinforcement of disaster response capacity in third countries (see point 4.1.), foresaw a significant increase in the number of ECHO field experts.

DG ECHO fixed an intermediate target to have about 100 experts on the ground by the end of 2005. Consequently, 41 new posts were created of which 5 were directly related to the tsunami. 28 were to reinforce the 6 Regional Support Offices and 8 were new posts to reinforce existing and new offices. 83 experts were in place by the end of 2005 and a further 13 experts have been identified and will start their contracts in the first part of 2006..

The reinforcement of the Regional Support Offices involved the definition of standard structures for each Office and the allocation of certain specialist posts according to need e.g. rapid response co-ordinator, floater, security officer and sectoral specialists for medical, food aid, food security, nutritional and disaster preparedness issues and the creation of a team of experts to deal with thematic funding.

The objective was to enable DG ECHO to dispatch rapidly its experts to new crisis situations in order to carry out humanitarian needs assessments and participate in the co-ordination of humanitarian activities in the field with other major actors. DG ECHO was able to test its reinforced structure in October 2005 following a major earthquake in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan when experts were mobilised on the same day to carry out emergency assessments resulting in an immediate primary emergency decision.

Specialist networks of experts and working groups have been established to provide technical advice and support both to Headquarters and to the field in order to ensure consistency and coherence in DG ECHO's policies and to establish operational guidelines and agreed practices.

5.2. Security issues

The security of humanitarian personnel in the field is a growing concern for all humanitarian agencies. The number of deaths of humanitarian workers has significantly increased over the last few years.

For this reason, DG ECHO launched in 2005 a follow-up security review to that completed in 2004. The 2004 review had identified a number of areas that require further attention by humanitarian actors including: security training of trainers; information collection (including gathering of statistics), analysis and dissemination of information collected; and NGO security co-ordination mechanisms.

With this second review DG ECHO's intention is to continue to assist NGOs to meet their responsibilities towards the security of humanitarian personnel. This review should add value

by: primarily producing training methodologies for NGO security trainers, which will be tested in the field; and by producing other tools that will be placed in the public domain to assist NGOs in building and maintaining their security management capacity.

DG ECHO is committed to assisting partners in their efforts to ensure that field staff can do their work effectively and safely, and to promoting advocacy for humanitarian space. The best way to preserve this is to maintain a high level of engagement in the good donorship principles, to remain committed to high quality assistance and to maintain a transparent dialogue with other key players, bilaterally and in multilateral humanitarian fora.

5.3. Communication and information

Regarding its communication strategy, DG ECHO undertook a range of actions in pursuit of its objectives to disseminate the values, principles and practical achievements of EU humanitarian aid. It continued to inform wide audiences on DG ECHO's work through television, radio and other mass media.

Audiovisual items were produced on the huge disasters - tsunami and South-Asia earthquake - in partnership with UN agencies and NGOs.

Other communication products included press releases, witness accounts published on the website and editorial features in airlines in-flight magazines.

An integrated awareness-raising campaign was run as a pilot operation in the Czech Republic, including a media event in Prague (Humanitarian village), schools visits, publications and a dedicated website.

DG ECHO also continued to focus its efforts on communicating with specific target audiences, notably young people and opinion leaders through participation in conferences and involvement in exhibitions or in other public events.

5.4. Audit and evaluations

DG ECHO has formal systems for regularly monitoring financial information and providing adequate management information. Specific financial indicators have been incorporated into an overall scoreboard. Humanitarian activities are subject to financial audits, both at headquarters and in the field. In 2005 a total of 142 audits were finalised or in progress at the headquarters of the humanitarian organisations and 24 operational (field and office) audits were carried out.

Every year, DG ECHO conducts between eight to ten evaluations of its operations on a geographical basis, on partners and on thematic issues.

5.4.1. Reviews aimed at capacity building.

- A review of **Water and Sanitation** issues relating to the funding of Humanitarian Operations under the EC Humanitarian Regulation.

The review produced a concept paper and model guidelines. The concept paper reviewed the EC Humanitarian Regulation, policies and financing issues, trends in humanitarian assistance, key issues in water and sanitation sector, application of standards, and key conclusions and recommendations. The model guidelines translate the concept paper into practical guidance:

how to address cross-cutting issues, gender, environment, etc, integrating hygiene behaviour change, good practice by emergency scenario, disaster mitigation and preparedness, application of standards. It also incorporates existing literature and reference materials for reference.

- A review of **cross-cutting and other key issues** relating to the funding of humanitarian operations under the EC humanitarian regulation.

5.4.2. *Evaluation of a partnership*

- Evaluation of the partnership between DG ECHO and the **UNHCR** and of UNHCR activities funded by DG ECHO.

The evaluation formulated a set of clear findings, conclusions and recommendations for UNHCR and for DG ECHO, on how to improve the overall DG ECHO-UNHCR partnership, at both operational and thematic levels.

5.4.3. *Evaluation of operations*

In 2005 evaluations were launched for Haiti, Burundi, Uganda, Sri Lanka¹¹ and North Korea, and on disaster preparedness activities in the Caribbean. The overall assessment of the evaluators was that actions financed by DG ECHO in these countries did indeed meet key humanitarian objectives.

For more details on these evaluations, refer to DG ECHO's internet site http://ec.europa.eu/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

5.5. **Training and studies**

A considerable effort was made in 2005 to improve the knowledge of DG ECHO's and partners staff on the new Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) which regulates the relations between DG ECHO and its partners. Some 500 people benefited from these sessions. Moreover, a set of supporting documents on different aspects of the FPA have been made available on the DG ECHO's website.

DG ECHO continued to support the Network on Humanitarian Assistance (NOHA), which offers a one-year multi-disciplinary post-graduate diploma with seven universities participating across Europe (Université Catholique de Louvain - Belgium, Université Paul Cézanne Aix-Marseille III (UPCAM) - France, Ruhr-Universität Bochum - Germany, University College of Dublin - Ireland, Universidad de Deusto - Spain, University of Uppsala - Sweden and University of Gröningen - The Netherlands) with the backing of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) and other actors of the humanitarian relief community.

6. **CONCLUSION**

2005 was a challenging year for DG ECHO due to the number and severity of humanitarian crises. DG ECHO has been nevertheless able to fulfil its role in accordance with its mandate.

¹¹ The evaluation was also conducted in the Tamil refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, India.

In the future, DG ECHO will be confronted to other challenges such as relations with new actors in the humanitarian field (in particular civil protection entities) and the implementation of the humanitarian system reform initiated in 2005¹².

DG ECHO will actively support this reform process to ensure that it improves the global humanitarian response capacity and efficiency.

¹² For details of humanitarian system reform, see part 2.