

Brussels, 10 September 2012

## **Evaluation of the Action Plan 2008-2013 of the Humanitarian Consensus**

# **Political demands for ECHO**

Following on from research conducted by 8 member organisations of Caritas Europa in 2011 and published in the report; Bridging the Gap Between Policy and Practice: The European Consensus on Humanitarian and the Humanitarian Principles<sup>1</sup>, we wish to raise the following points for consideration by ECHO as it prepares for the evaluation of the Action Plan 2008-2013 of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid:

1. We welcome the commitment to the evaluation being independent, and undertaken by external consultant.
2. The Terms of Reference should include a detailed in-depth evaluation of a selection of Member States (MS), as well as a broad overview of the implementation of the Action Plan across all MS and the EU. For this, we suggest that at least 5-8 MS are selected that represent a cross-section of MS within the EU. For instance, consideration should be given to size (large-small) of budget, staffing/resources, and capacity, as well as duration of membership with the EU and level of response (high-low) to humanitarian crises during the period 2008-2012. The evaluation team should visit the capitals of these MS to talk to both government and civil society humanitarian stakeholders.
3. Consultation/involvement of civil society and humanitarian NGOs: NGOs should be consulted at the following stages:
  - a. each MS should be required/strongly requested to consult with their own national NGOs as part of their own input into the evaluation
  - b. for the in-depth evaluation of some MS, the evaluation team should meet with national NGOs in separate fora, without government presence.
  - c. there should be at least 2 Brussels-based consultations with humanitarian NGOs; an initial meeting to feed into the evaluation as the evaluation team start the process of gathering their evidence, and a second meeting when the evaluation report is in draft form, but before the findings and recommendations have been finalised.
4. All MS should fill in a detailed questionnaire as part of their feeding into the evaluation. MS consultation with civil society should be a requirement.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.caritas-europa.org/code/en/abou.asp?Page=1327&menuPage=1327>

5. A Reference or Advisory Group should be formed to help steer the work of the external consultants and provide technical inputs when finalizing the evaluation report. This should have representation from humanitarian NGOs.
6. Consideration should be given to the involvement of other EU Institutions during the completion of the evaluation, the EP for instance in holding hearings.
7. The evaluation Terms of Reference should specifically include an examination of what mechanisms have worked best in enabling Member States to action the Consensus in their humanitarian policies and practices, including whether peer reviews are a useful mechanism, particularly for Member States with smaller humanitarian budgets.
8. The preamble to the ToRs for the evaluation of the Action Plan should underline the European Union's continuing commitment to the Consensus. An important clause of the ToRs should be to propose key elements for a second phase Action Plan or other appropriate tool(s) in order to ensure that the Consensus remains a relevant cornerstone and framework for European humanitarian action at all levels.
9. The final evaluation should be a public document, readily and immediately available on the EC website.
10. The evaluation should be conducted in a timely manner, in order to ensure the timely development of the next stage post-2013 action plan, and to support MS improve their adherence to commitments within the Consensus. We strongly feel that as far as possible there should not be a time gap between the end of the current Action Plan and its replacement tool. As such the call for expressions of interest for contractors to undertake the evaluation should emphasize the need for a larger team of consultants rather than a longer time frame.
11. We request that the draft of the options paper being developed by ECHO's evaluation unit is shared with Caritas Europa and VOICE.
12. We request to see a copy of the 1st Annual Report on the implementation of the Consensus.

**For more information, please contact:**

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