

Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on humanitarian aid in a time of polycrisis - reaffirming our principles for a more effective and ambitious response to humanitarian crises

- 1. Rapporteur:** Leire PAJÍN (S&D / ES)
- 2. References:** 2025/2085(INI) / A10-0257/2025 / P10_TA(2026)0005
- 3. Date of adoption of the resolution:** 20 January 2026
- 4. Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Development (DEVE)
- 5. Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution outlines the European Parliament's key priorities in the humanitarian domain. It addresses the financial strain on global humanitarian systems caused by compounding crises. It urges the defence of core principles – humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence – amid a global “polycrisis”. It mandates the strengthening of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) including through enhanced accountability for IHL violations. It promotes the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus for more effective long-term responses. The resolution notably acknowledges that funding basic services (education, health, key infrastructure) has a key role in strengthening local resilience, including beyond the Global Gateway. The resolution also focuses on aid localisation by empowering local responders. It calls for addressing the disproportionate impact of crises on vulnerable groups including a commitment to gender-sensitive and environmentally conscious policies.

- 6. Ensuring respect for IHL and the need for an EU humanitarian diplomacy strategy:** paragraph 1-15

- Paragraphs 1-7

The Commission agrees with the European Parliament's assessment of the alarming increase of violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and the need to act urgently and decisively to preserve principled humanitarian action. This is one of the central messages that the Joint Communication on humanitarian aid adopted on 27 May aims to convey. The Commission has put several measures in place to strengthen the monitoring of IHL violations

such as supporting the IHL in Focus framework which includes a yearly report on the state of IHL in the world and context-specific analyses of IHL. The Commission has also supported the development of the Stockholm Manual for assessing respect for IHL and believes that such a resource can assist with more effective advocacy to protect civilians in conflict. Supporting monitoring will remain part of our funding priorities.

The Commission agrees that undertaking tangible actions to strengthen the safety and support of humanitarian personnel is essential. It will remain committed to defend the normative framework protecting aid workers but also support those on the frontlines through concrete actions. In this respect, the Commission welcomes the recognition of the value of the Protect Aid Workers, a unique mechanism developed by the Commission which provides immediate and practical assistance to local humanitarian workers in situations of security incidents when on duty. Considering its proven value, the Commission is committed to making this mechanism a permanent feature, ensuring its sustainability and long-term impact.

The Commission takes note of the Parliament's comment on restrictive measures. In some of its sanctions regimes, the EU already considers undermining humanitarian assistance and access, including through obstruction, violations of IHL and disregard for humanitarian principles, as a criterion for imposing restrictive measures on individuals and entities responsible for such acts. Examples of sanctions regimes including this type of criterion are the EU Global Human Rights, the Niger and the DRC sanctions regimes. The EU has also made progress with the introduction of humanitarian clauses in different frameworks and continues engaging with Member States on this very important topic.

- Paragraphs 8-12

The Commission welcomes the Parliament's call for an urgent response to the humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Commission has mobilised all its tools to address the crisis: increased humanitarian funding, reinforced logistics capacity and stepping up its efforts in terms of humanitarian diplomacy. The latter includes sustained advocacy with Member States and joint efforts with OCHA and the African Union to help galvanise political attention and operational commitments for the region.

The Commission welcomes the Parliament's call for an urgent response to the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, the country with the highest number of people in need globally. This is the world's largest displacement crisis and is emerging as a catastrophic protection crisis with systematic atrocities, disregard for IHL and alarming levels of conflict-related sexual violence. The Commission remains committed to continue supporting the humanitarian response including protection in Sudan as long as needed, with all the tools at its disposal: funding, air bridges and sea freight but also with increased advocacy, as in high-level events hosted or co-hosted by the Commission since the beginning of the crisis.

The Commission shares the Parliament's indignation at the killing of humanitarian workers in Gaza - a toll of 560 as of April 2026 and at the repeated attacks on civilian infrastructure. The Commission fully endorses the principle that humanitarian aid must never be politicised or weaponised and must reach civilians in need in full compliance with IHL. The Commission strongly supports the call for an international investigation and accountability for possible violations of international law at Gaza Humanitarian Foundation-managed sites. It strongly opposes any aid distribution system that is incompatible with humanitarian principles.

The Commission supports the centrality of the UN-led humanitarian coordination system to ensure that all humanitarian efforts remain guided by IHL and established humanitarian principles and continues to call for unimpeded and sustained access to Gaza. The Commission also draws attention to the situation in the West Bank where an increased erosion of the humanitarian space raises serious concerns about violations of human rights and international law. The Commission confirms its strong support for UNRWA both through advocacy and funding, as the agency plays a central role in delivering vital services to Palestinian refugees. It remains committed to continuing this support and to ensuring UNRWA has the resources needed to fulfil its mandate.

The Commission welcomes the Parliament's emphasis on the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the risk of deterioration with returns from Pakistan and Iran. Women and girls are by far the most affected, facing more barriers to access basic services and humanitarian aid. The Commission continues to implement a comprehensive and locally driven humanitarian approach through its partners, focusing on healthcare, education and protection with support to mobile health services, nutrition programmes and community-

based learning opportunities. Safe spaces provide psychosocial and protection support and legal assistance. The Commission also works to ensure the meaningful participation of female humanitarian staff which is essential to reach women and girls in the current context.

The Commission welcomes the Parliament's call for EU humanitarian assistance to the civilian population affected by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine to be stepped up, with a focus on the needs of most vulnerable people, in particular the internally displaced persons, refugees, women and girls, persons with disabilities, older persons and children, including victims of forced deportation to the Russian Federation and occupied territories.

Humanitarian diplomacy: Paragraph 13-15

The Commission fully agrees on the need for concrete and meaningful actions that strengthen the EU's humanitarian diplomacy on the ground. A central part of the 2026 Joint Communication on humanitarian aid is to develop a strategic approach to EU humanitarian diplomacy. The Communication was accompanied by a dedicated Staff Working Document on humanitarian diplomacy which describes the principles and thematic priorities for EU humanitarian diplomacy, as well as ways to strengthen the existing toolbox. This will be done with the European External Action Service, and in close coordination with EU Special Representatives.

Humanitarian aid funding and architecture: paragraphs 16 to 26

The Commission welcomes the Parliament's support for a reinforced humanitarian aid budget in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), reflecting the growing scale, the complexity and duration of global crises. Ensuring adequate, predictable and flexible funding will remain essential for the EU to respond effectively to rising humanitarian needs and to uphold its role as a reliable global humanitarian donor. At the same time, the Commission considers that certain elements of the resolution, in particular references to ring-fencing flexibility for humanitarian aid and maintaining separate instruments are not optimal in the current context of increasing and rapidly evolving crises. Such an approach risks limiting the EU's capacity to respond swiftly and effectively where needs are greatest and could reduce the coherence of EU external action.

- Flexibility, transparency and humanitarian principles: paragraphs 18 and 19

The Commission considers that flexibility is essential to ensure timely, needs-based responses in rapidly evolving crisis contexts and to avoid delays in mobilising assistance. At the same time, the Commission fully recognises the importance of transparency, accountability and sound financial management. EU humanitarian assistance is already subject to rigorous partner selection, monitoring and control mechanisms, in close cooperation with Member States and international partners, in order to minimise risks of diversion or misuse of funds. These safeguards ensure that EU funding effectively reaches populations most in need while upholding the Union's values and abiding by its legal framework. While humanitarian aid funding is proposed to be part of the Global Europe instrument, its implementation should remain exclusively governed by the Humanitarian Aid Regulation. This would provide full assurance that EU humanitarian assistance be delivered in strict compliance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and will remain firmly needs-based and separate from other policy objectives.

- Thematic priorities and needs-based approach: paragraphs 20, 21 and 25:

The Commission reiterates its strong commitment to addressing forgotten crises and to supporting vulnerable groups including children, persons with disabilities, and women and girls. These priorities are already systematically integrated into EU humanitarian response through a needs-based and

context-driven approach. At the same time, the Commission considers that introducing fixed earmarking or quantitative targets for specific priorities could reduce the flexibility required to respond effectively to evolving humanitarian needs. Preserving the ability to allocate funding based on assessed needs remains essential to ensure that assistance reaches those most affected, in line with humanitarian principles.

- **Humanitarian system reform:** paragraph 23

The Commission is fully aligned with the resolution's emphasis on the Humanitarian Reset as a critical opportunity to reaffirm humanitarian principles and achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in response efforts. It welcomes the call to ensure that the reform of the humanitarian system is driven by needs-based and people-centred approaches. To this end, the Commission stands ready to work closely with the EU Member States, other donors and humanitarian organisations to ensure that reforms deliver tangible results for those most in need.

Developing an integrated approach to fragile contexts: paragraphs 27 to 30

The Commission welcomes the Parliament's emphasis on the need for tailored, context-specific and conflict-sensitive approaches to fragile contexts. It fully shares the Parliament's view that sustainable solutions must go beyond short-term responses and address the root causes of fragility while ensuring that no one is left behind. The Commission also agrees with the Parliament on the need to break cycles of dependency by strengthening resilience and sustainable development, including through essential services, infrastructure, and job creation.

In line with the Parliament's call, the Commission is preparing an integrated approach to fragility. One of the Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the May 2026 Joint Communication on humanitarian aid outlines the key features of the EU's integrated approach to fragility and its implementation. The integrated approach will reinforce coherence of EU action across respective tools and interventions, including humanitarian aid, development cooperation, and peace and security- while keeping the EU engagement in fragile contexts flexible and context specific. This means notably reinforcing a Team Europe approach and the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus implementation, while fully respecting a

principled humanitarian action. The document also outlines pathways to strengthen collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders, including with EU Member States as well as with like-minded countries, relevant international financial institutions, the private sector, local actors and civil society, the UN, non-governmental organisations and other partners.

The Commission is also actively stepping up the use of innovative and flexible financing mechanisms, in a Team Europe approach, in view of attracting more private funding, while empowering the local private sector, for example through conflict-sensitive Global Gateway investments in fragile settings, where appropriate. Furthermore, the Commission recognises the existential threat that climate change poses to fragile States and remains committed to climate-proofing its interventions

Promoting effective humanitarian responses through the implementation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus, localisation of aid and anticipatory action: paragraphs 31-36

- Paragraphs 31 to 33

The Commission agrees with the Parliament on the crucial role that HDP nexus collaboration plays in efficiently preventing and addressing humanitarian needs and in supporting recovery. The coupling of increasing humanitarian needs with preliminary OECD data pointing to a 23% decrease of global Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2025 confirm the need to accelerate efforts that strengthen prevention, sustainable solutions and community engagement, and accelerate innovative partnerships. Reinforced coordination and collaboration across the nexus are key. The Commission will strengthen its systematic nexus collaboration across services, with Member States, and key external actors, including the UN system, international financial institutions, and private sector. The Commission will also scale up multi-year funding that can contribute to more systemic and resilience building responses, particularly in protracted crises.

In line with the Parliament's call, the Commission plans to deliver on its commitment to channel at least 25 % of its humanitarian funding to local actors by 2027 and is considering expanding its support to more locally led pooled funds. With regard to the Parliament's suggestion to explore how to provide grants directly to local organisations, article 7 of the humanitarian aid regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96) states that the

Commission can only fund organisations that have their headquarters in a Member State of the EU. This means that the Commission is not able to fund local actors directly where humanitarian aid is concerned. However, the Commission supports locally led action with funding through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation (NDICI – Global Europe) instrument, with a focus on local authorities and Civil Society Organisations, youth, women’s rights organisations or groups in vulnerable situations, in the context of the broader HDP Nexus.

25 years of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000): towards a gender-sensitive approach to humanitarian aid: paragraphs 37- 46

In line with the Parliament’s call, the Commission will continue implementing gender mainstreaming in its humanitarian operations and contributing to women’s empowerment. This means ensuring that all our support is gender-responsive and uses specific tools such as a gender-age marker (different from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) marker), to hold the Commission and its partners accountable.

In parallel, the Commission will continue promoting the participation of crisis-affected women, girls, boys and men in the design, implementation and evaluation of humanitarian actions, as well as the inclusion of local women-led organisations in its response. Despite increasing attacks on gender-related programmes and worrying funding cuts by international donors, the Commission will increase efforts to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls and protect them from all forms of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. The Commission reaffirms its strong commitment to preventing and ending sexual and gender-based violence in conflict settings, as well as supporting victims in a survivor-centered approach. To this end, it has just launched the Sexual and Reproductive Health in Emergencies and Life in Dignity (SHIELD) initiative, a EUR 10 million partnership with UNFPA. It will focus specifically on improving access to **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)** and preventing and responding to gender-based violence in emergency settings. This underscores the Commission’s lasting commitment to being a reliable, principled and predictable donor in an increasingly fragile and dangerous world for women and girls.