

Brussels, 18 December 2007

## **A European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: working together to help people in need**

***The Presidents of the European Commission, European Parliament and Council of the European Union on behalf of the 27 EU Member States today signed a 'European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid'. The Consensus sets out a common EU vision and a practical approach for reaching out effectively to millions of people worldwide suffering as a result of conflicts and natural disasters.***

Around half of official international humanitarian aid is provided by the EU, either through the European Commission or bilaterally by Member States. So far this year, the European Commission alone has distributed more than €700 million in humanitarian relief aid. The funds are used to help crisis victims throughout the world – ranging from the provision of food and healthcare in Darfur, to meeting the immediate needs of cyclone victims in Bangladesh for clean water and essential household items.

In adopting the European Consensus - putting in place for the first time a comprehensive joint EU policy statement on humanitarian aid - the EU is showing its strong commitment to working closely together to help others.

Signing on behalf of the European Commission, President José Manuel Barroso said: "The EU is the world's biggest aid donor but we can do it better by working increasingly closer together. Common objectives, shared principles and better coordination can strengthen our capacity to help people in need."

Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said: "I am extremely pleased with the outcome of this process which was launched a year ago. Our common objective in approving the Humanitarian Consensus is to present a clear European vision and approach to humanitarian aid so that we can help people in desperate need more quickly, effectively and efficiently."

The European Consensus, which was proposed by the Commission, aims at boosting EU coordination and emphasises good donor practice. It also clearly underlines the different roles of those involved in providing relief. Delivering aid successfully in very difficult circumstances demands strong partnership and good links to the international community, including the UN, the Red Cross movement and the humanitarian NGOs. Local capacity is also crucial to save lives and minimise suffering. Through the Consensus, the EU also affirms its commitment to supporting vulnerable communities through risk reduction and disaster preparedness work.

See also:

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/whatsnew/consensus\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/whatsnew/consensus_en.htm)