

THE EUROPEAN HUMANITARIAN FORUM

2024



**ACTION
AGAINST
HUNGER**



EU IN ACTION TO END HUNGER

In 2022, acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) reached an alarming level across the 58 food crises under increased monitoring by the humanitarian community, where 258M people faced crisis, emergency or catastrophic levels of hunger. While we have entered the last decade of the 2030 Agenda, **we are far from reaching the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2) to end hunger.**

The root causes behind global food and nutrition insecurity are widely acknowledged. Yet humanitarian needs are reaching unprecedented levels within vulnerable communities while the humanitarian space is dangerously shrinking putting at risk aid workers and principled access to populations in crisis. **As the funding budget is lacking, the humanitarian community keeps struggling to anticipate crises and provide qualitative and inclusive assistance.**



At the third edition of the European Humanitarian Forum, Action against Hunger calls the European Union, its Member States, and their partners to **take urgent actions and scale up their political engagement** to respect the commitment made by the international community: **Zero Hunger in 2030.**

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BRING EU HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP

The unlawful denial of access by conflict parties, the non-respect of IHL and the lack of protection of humanitarian space limit the scope of assistance, put civilians and aid workers at risk and contribute to an increase in the level of hunger. **At the EHF, the EU and its Member States must demonstrate their global leadership and step up action to coordinate its humanitarian diplomacy under three main priorities:**

PROMOTE IHL COMPLIANCE TO PREVENT THE IMPACT OF USE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Conflict remains a key driver of acute food insecurity globally. In 2018, the UN Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted *Resolution 2417* and recognised the interconnection between armed conflicts, unlawful denial of humanitarian access, hunger, and famine risk. *Resolution 2417* aims to be both a preventive tool to protect civilians and an accountability tool to hold perpetrators to account. However, five years on, many parties to conflicts continue to fail to comply with *Resolution 2417*, which drives humanitarian needs in conflict contexts. **The EU and its Member States should address the 2417 UN Security Council Resolution implementation as a priority in the EHF and engage on concrete actions :**

- **Support the elaboration of common messages and positions** among EU Member States with the adoption of Council conclusions on conflict-induced hunger;
 - **Support the development of a European humanitarian diplomacy** based on the display of existing initiatives and common guidelines in order to promote humanitarian access and IHL compliance, protection of civilians and prevent the use of violence against food security;
 - **Call for enhanced compliance and strengthened accountability mechanisms** of the
- 2417 UN Security Council Resolution* and support a EU coordinated engagement at the UN/ Security Council level;
- **Ratify the 2019 amendment on starvation in the Rome Statute** that strengthened international efforts to combat starvation in all conflicts and aligned the *Rome Statute* with international humanitarian law and customary international law. Wide ratification is key to the prevention, prohibition and punishment of the crime of starvation, and thus to the protection of civilians from this atrocity.



STRENGTHEN EU ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT TO PROTECT THE HUMANITARIAN AND HEALTH WORKERS

Amidst violent conflicts and the ever-growing and multifaceted humanitarian crises around the globe, protecting humanitarian and health workers is a prerequisite for the provision of aid and medical care to those in need. Yet, humanitarian and health workers have faced alarming violence over the past few years, with ongoing challenges to security, safety and access. The attacks on aid workers and their facilities continue to show worrying trends and keep impacting national staff in majority. Despite normative protective frameworks and humanitarian diplomacy initiatives to improve the protection of aid workers, **urgent action needs be taken and supported by the EU and its Member States to move forward to protect immediately aid workers at risk and prevent attacks:**

- **Support the development of joint EU messages and coordination tools** to reinforce the protection of humanitarian and health workers;
- **Support the development of innovative projects** to ensure global protection for humanitarian workers at risk in close collaboration with civil society organisations;
- **Include the protection of aid workers in national humanitarian strategies** to guarantee appropriate and inclusive support and funding to the protection of humanitarian and health workers and to their families;
- **Reinforce security risk management mechanisms (SRM) and capacities**, including adequate, systematic and effective funding to support robust SRM and infrastructures for all actors;
- **Collaborate closely and support the local organisations and actors** in a risk-sharing and equitable partnership approach;
- **Support the *Humanitarian Call for Action*** to ensure a complete sign-off and engagement from all EU Member States along the EU to facilitate collective and consistent commitment.

SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR MITIGATION AND SAFEGUARDING MEASURES IN REGARD TO SANCTIONS REGIMES AND COUNTERTERRORISM MEASURES (SCTMs)

The impacts of SCTMs at international, regional and national level on humanitarian action have been widely documented in the past ten years. Yet, they continue to create uncertainty among humanitarian and health workers, while impeding the impartial delivery of aid and healthcare and putting actors at further risk of attacks and criminalisation. SCTMs not only pose challenges to principled humanitarian action, but also present significant challenges for national and international NGOs to navigate this complex and changing legal environment. **The UNSC Resolution 2664 should guide the EU and its Member States to protect humanitarian assistance in its domestic legal framework as well as its humanitarian diplomacy:**

- **Support the systematic transposition of the UNSC Resolution 2664** into current and future EU autonomous sanction regimes, as well as national level; the *UN Security Council Resolution 2664* into national regulations in countries of humanitarian interventions;
- **Strengthen the coordination** to ensure harmonised regimes and mitigated impact on humanitarian action and actors at EU and national levels between the competent authorities;
- **Support evidence-gathering and reporting mechanisms** of the impact of sanctions and humanitarian exemptions and actively disseminate and raise awareness of these exemptions with private sectors.
- **Scale up EU leadership through humanitarian diplomacy** to support the transposition of

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TACKLE AND PREVENT NUTRITION AND FOOD CRISIS

REINFORCE ANTICIPATORY ACTION MECHANISMS AND HUMANITARIAN PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

The impact of multiple crises (e.g. climate, conflicts, epidemic...) on food and nutrition security should be addressed through strengthened early warning systems with linked anticipatory action and rapid funding modalities. Indeed, by acting ahead of predicted hazardous events, it aims at mitigating its impact on the communities and their livelihoods and at reducing acute humanitarian impacts. **Political willingness should go hand in hand with additional funding support to react early enough to alerting levels of people's food and nutrition insecurity status and to engage in a powerful humanitarian diplomacy to allow assistance delivery when required.**

- **Commit new and additional funding to the indispensable components of anticipatory action** - early warning system, early action protocols and operations, and pre-funding allocation - without leading to a reduction in humanitarian funding to address current and emerging humanitarian needs;
- **Support locally led co-design and action with the most vulnerable communities** in adaptation and mitigation initiatives by promoting accessible, long-term and flexible funding for local communities, civil society organisations and grassroots groups;
- **Promote institutionalisation of national and local driven anticipatory action and local early warning systems**, including those that support social structures and social innovation;
- **Support and scale-up G7 foreign ministers' statement on anticipatory action and invest an increased part of the humanitarian funding for anticipatory action** - including early warning system, early action protocols and operations, and pre-funding allocation - notably by supporting the integration of preparedness and anticipatory action in the *Humanitarian Programme Cycle* as well as development planning (\$10) and increasing financial resources for anticipatory action (\$15-19);
- **Enhance the dissemination of the data and evidence collected** from strengthened early warning and forecast systems to trigger political action and prevent IPC levels transforming from IPC 2, 3 to 4 or 5;
- **Invest in anticipatory humanitarian action** with respect to conflict as well as climate change impacts;
- **Strengthen high-level humanitarian and preventive diplomacy** to preserve humanitarian space conducive to future emergency preemptive and reactive response, ensure readiness across the humanitarian sector to respond;



OPERATIONALISE A NUTRITION RESILIENCE APPROACH IN THE HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

The vast majority of chronically food-insecure and malnourished people in the world live in conflict-affected countries. In contexts that are fragile and affected by protracted crises, people experience both chronic and humanitarian needs, which translate into persistent acute and chronic malnutrition. To address this, coherence between humanitarian and development efforts is required. **Initiatives should be more effectively connected, tackling short-term needs while providing long-term solutions, and working towards achieving collective outcomes that reduce risk and vulnerability.**

- **Acknowledge the importance of context-specific interventions requiring nutrition causal analyses** of the most important factors influencing nutritional status among specific populations. Good measurement and analysis should drive diagnosis and response involving individuals and communities;
- **Focus resilience-strengthening initiatives on deliberately on improving women's and children's nutritional status** through nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions to ensure sustainable improvements in human capital and well-being in shock-prone regions;
- **Prioritise nutrition-sensitive and specific interventions targeting women and children's nutritional status** in development and humanitarian action, implementing a gender-sensitive and transformative approach addressing the nutritional needs of women and children;
- **Recognize the multi-scale nature of nutrition resilience:** household level, community level, etc. and address these levels simultaneously and coherently, while recognizing the power dynamics that crosscut them;
- **Support adaptive and transformative approaches in food security and nutrition programming,** going behind the strengthened ability of households to absorb shock;
- **Promote multi-sectoral collaboration for programming** defining a shared set of objectives and priorities across sectors;
- **Support preparedness planning as well as risk analysis and risk management strategies** at all levels (individual, community, and systems);
- **Recognize adaptive management as essential** by promoting annual resilience measurements tracking the effectiveness of interventions and allowing for adjustments to be made;
- **Implement a partnership and a localisation approach** by working with local stakeholders, local civil society and state institutions to ensure the sustainability of nutrition prevention actions and placing communities at the centre of this approach for sustainable prevention of malnutrition.



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ADDRESS FUNDING GAP THROUGH INCREASED AND QUALITATIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In addition to the shrinking of humanitarian space and the increasing vulnerabilities to crises, humanitarian appeals continue to suffer from a lack of funding. The humanitarian community is now deploring a funding gap but also a lack of qualitative financial support to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in aid delivery. The 2016 *Grand Bargain* commitments to provide quality predictable and flexible funding, presented an opportunity for donors to introduce new mechanisms of humanitarian fundings. **Following the adoption of the Council Conclusion on the humanitarian funding gap in 2022, appropriate financial support should be provided by donors to end the hunger spiral:**

- **Support increased EU and Member States engagement in the humanitarian budget**, as part of the annual EU budget procedure and national engagement. Specific additional support to neglected crises should be enshrined and/or strengthened in funding lines;
- **Advocate for the development of a larger volume of flexible and multiannual fundings from donors** as part of the *Grand Bargain's* commitments to provide quality predictable and flexible funding, whilst at the same time, maintaining a higher level of visibility;
- **Promote the extension of debt relief, as well as the renegotiation of debt and support debt conversions**, to avoid unsustainable debt burdens that constrain countries' capacities to invest in social protection and nutrition security;
- **Promote the allocation of more resources to the Special Drawing Rights mechanism**, and consider reforms to the quota system that determines allocation of SDRs to ensure lowest income countries receive more resources through this mechanism;
- **Support the development of programme-based approaches with unearmarked funding and capacity for multi donors engagement** based on existing good practices and recent DG ECHO engagement;
- **Strengthen EU coordination to use diplomatic tracks** to widen the donor base to increase available funding for rising needs;
- **Ensure a clear distinction between a political/security agenda and principled humanitarian aid and guarantee** that humanitarian aid funding is based solely on humanitarian needs and not on political objectives.



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